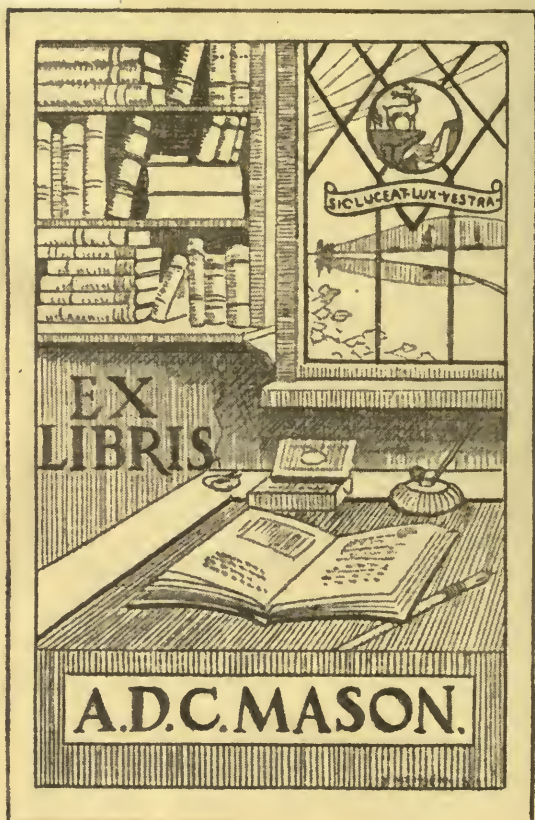


DAY-DREAMS OF A SCHOOLMASTER




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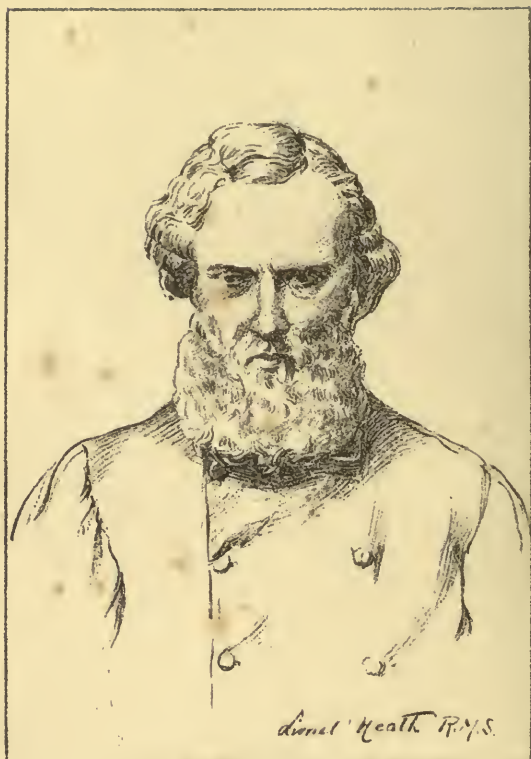
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**DAY-DREAMS OF
A SCHOOLMASTER**
D'ARCY W. THOMPSON ❧

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D. Ardy W. Thompson

DAY-DREAMS
OF A SCHOOL-
MASTER ❀ ❀ ❀
D'ARCY W. THOMPSON



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*Tibi, carissime mi figliole,
parvulus parvulo,
hic libellulus dedicatur :
siquid ibi acerbi, parum accurate perpensi,
invenerit, utut inveniet, lector,
id scripsi ego :
si quid ibi lectori vel minime arrideat,
id omne, mi figliole, scripserint
amor tui
et cujusdam alterius desiderium*

PREFATORY NOTE

A GOOD many years ago a copy of "Day-dreams of a Schoolmaster" fell into my hands. To the uninitiated the title, so full of charm to those who know the book, could not prevail against the dull and heavy aspect of the dingy volume, and it was in a spirit of duty, therefore, that I sat down to acquaint myself with the contents of what looked like a mere pedagogical treatise.

I had hardly read the first page, however, when I realised that I was on the border of a delectable country. It was a time of tribulation. In an upper room was a small boy who had lain unconscious for some days, and our spirits were heavy as we thought of what any day might bring forth. At such a time the printed page has little power, as a rule, to divert one's thoughts, but I turned very few of those in this book ere I felt impelled to share with my wife the emotions which they aroused, and I read aloud most of the volume as we watched by the little bed. We felt the presence of a rare and noble spirit, and there was exquisite pleasure in the contact with one who could express with so tender a touch the light and shade of life.

At the time of writing this book D'Arcy

PREFATORY NOTE

Thompson was teaching the Classics at Edinburgh Academy, and his soul appears to have revolted at the dreary waste of effort involved in the methods of teaching usually employed at that time. This is the theme of his "Day-dreams," and reading between the lines we can see that his endeavours to bring about reforms were not unattended with difficulty. Many years later he expressed doubt as to whether he had not laid irreverent hands upon ancient forms and time-honoured traditions, but whatever the value of the book to the teacher, as such, to the layman fortunate enough to discover it, it has been a source of unalloyed delight. D'Arcy Thompson was dubbed an unsuccessful schoolmaster. No doubt he was in advance of his time, but two lads who rose to eminence in literature were in his class at the Academy—Robert Louis Stevenson and Andrew Lang—and who shall say how much these men owed to his individuality. Mr. Lang has written in "Adventures Among Books": "One can never say how much one owes to a schoolmaster who was a friend of literature, who kept a houseful of books, and who was himself a graceful scholar and an author, while he chose to write, of poetic and humorous genius."

PREFATORY NOTE

It must be confessed that the ostensible subject of "Day-dreams of a School-master" appears somewhat trivial to-day, but did not Lamb write an immortal essay on "Roast Pig"? The reader of this book may not be in the least interested in the way in which small boys should be taught Latin, and probably no teacher would purchase it to inform himself at this date as to what the author thought on the subject, but lay reader and teacher alike will continue to find charm in the inconsequent meditations of a delightful writer, whose grace of literary expression has been compared with that of Charles Lamb by no less a critic than Sir William Robertson Nicoll.

It is somewhat strange that so delightful a piece of literature should not be better known, but the fault is the author's. He had no thought of posterity and included chunks of matter which could have been of interest to few even in his own day. Probably many potential readers have been "warned off" by the forbidding appearance of the blocks of Greek, and the grammatical tables which largely filled the middle of his book. The original Chapters XII to XV were almost entirely "pedagogical," and in this edition they have been left out in

PREFATORY NOTE

the hope that their omission will prove an Open Sesame to many who otherwise might turn aside from the joys awaiting them. No attempt has been made to prune other chapters of details which give them, perhaps, something of a pedagogical appearance. These must stand. Reader, be not of the dull tribe who are turned from the pasture by barbed entanglements, which on closer acquaintance prove to be cobweb merely, sparkling with dew !

H.

London, March 1912.

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I. THE UNDER FORM AT ST. EDWARD'S, AND THE THEORY OF ELEMENTARY UNINTELLIGIBILITY

THIS day—October 10th, 1863—my Junior Class, in the Schola Nova of Dunedin, had its first lesson in Greek; put aside its frock and linen pants, and donned its breeches, intellectually. No transition-state is agreeable to the subject, or graceful in the eyes of a looker-on. These little fellows will all waddle, duck-like, for a considerable period in their new clothes: some will never habituate themselves thereto; but will by and by discard them, and return to the frock and linen pants; affording, it may be, a passing laugh to the unphilosophic bystander, but themselves deriving permanent comfort and unrestricted swing of limb.

The step these innocents take to-day is, of course, a step into the dark. Will the darkness, into which they so confidently plunge, be to them perpetual and Cimmerian? or, will it duly break into a clear, bright dawn? Within three years, the majority of them will have probably passed from within these walls. What an opportunity is meanwhile afforded of wreaking upon their little heads summary vengeance for the wrongs done me by a past generation!

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of doing to them as I was done by ! Not only should I thus be giving vent to my indignation for past ill-usage ; but, strange to say, I should actually be carrying out the wishes of the parents of my victims ; for, in general, those parents dread new-fangled ways, and cling piously to old scholastic superstitions. Well : for three years, then, let me lead this little flock, blindfolded, by curiously sinuous and zig-zag ways ; so that, always in motion, they may never progress ; and at the close of the triennium, remove the bandage from their eyes, and show them to their wonderment, that they are standing by the starting-post ; that they have been dancing their Greek hornpipe on a plate.

This first lesson has turned back the dial-hand of my days, and for a passing hour I am standing in the dawn of my own most dreary, weary boyhood.

I was not quite seven and a half years old, when my dear Mother was presented with a free admission for myself, her eldest son, to the Grammar School of St. Edward. The offer was too valuable a one to admit of refusal. I was accordingly prepared for admission to my new home, by having my hair somewhat closely shorn, and by being clothed in a long, blue gown, not of itself

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ungraceful, but opening in front so as to disclose the ridiculous spectacle of knee-breeched, yellow-stockinged legs. After some laughter at my disguise, and much weeping at my banishment, I bade good-bye to my dear Mother. We little thought at the time that school was to be my home for twelve long years.

The day after my entry into this colossal institution, a Latin grammar was placed into my hands. It was a bulky book of its kind : considering the diminutiveness of the new student, a portentously bulky book. It was bulky in consequence of its comprehensiveness. It gave all imaginable rules, and all imaginable exceptions. It had providentially stored within it the requisite gear for whatever casualty might befall us. The syntax rules, in the edition presented to me, were, for the first time, rendered mercifully in English : those for gender and quantity remained in the old Latin ; and the Latin was communicated in a hideously discordant rhythm. Over a space of years we went systematically through and through that book ; page after page, chapter after chapter. It was all unintelligible ; all obscure ; but some spots were wrapped in more than ordinary gloom. Our chronic bewilderment was varied from

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time to time by shooting pains, brought on by some passage or expression unusually indigestible. We read of creatures, happily few in number, that went about in the *Epicaene Gender*. Were they fish, flesh, or fowl? Would the breed be ever extinct? Under certain desperate circumstances, a participle and a noun together were bound hand and foot, and put into the *Ablative Absolute*. What had they done to be treated in a manner thus peremptory, unreasonable, crotchety? Did they ever get out after being once put in? Then there were gerunds in *Di*, *Do*, and *Dum*. How they recalled to us that old 'Fee,' 'Fi,' 'Fo,' 'Fum,' and the smell of English blood! And supines in *Um* and *U*. What was the meaning of these cabalistic names? I did not know then; and I do not know now. And yet I have been behind the scholastic curtain for twelve long years.

There was no entire chapter in the book more broken with pitfalls than that, composed in doggrel, which treated of the rules for gender. Not one word, I am sure, of an exceptional kind had escaped the diabolic ken of the compiler. String upon string of jangling, unmusical lines could we repeat with a singular rapidity; understanding

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nothing ; asking no questions. Oh the sweet, simple faith of childhood ! We had been told to commit those lines to memory, and we committed them. They would, doubtless, do us good in the latter days. We should, at all events, be flogged there and then, unless we sang them like caged birds. It was the will of Allah : Allah was good !

Many of the words in that puzzling liturgy I have never fallen in with since, though I have been a student of its dialect for twenty-seven years. Some of the words I have since discovered to be grossly indecent in their naked English meaning. Well, well : they might have all been so, without doing more harm to our morality than they did good to our understandings.

I can vividly recollect one circumstance, that broke in a startling manner to me the dull monotony of these years. It was a hot and sultry afternoon. My wits were wandering : I suppose in green fields. So, in class-time when my turn came round, my brain was a *tabula rasa* : the inscription was clean wiped out, that had been carefully written there but half an hour before. The Master, a clergyman, had broken his cane upon a previous delinquent ; his riding-whip was sent for, and I received

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ten lashes on my two hands. I was then under nine years of age. For a passing bewilderment, I was treated as though I had broken into an orchard. Our Master was shortly after, if I mistake not, presented to a vicarage: he was in appearance almost effeminately genteel; in dress, scrupulously neat; with fingers tapering and delicate as a lady's.

The round-shot of a Latin grammar had been, I believe, tied to our legs, to prevent our intellectually straying. However, in course of time we became habituated to the encumbrance, and ceased to feel it as a serious check upon our movements. The hour at length arrived, in which it was considered wise to attach another round-shot to our other legs. This was done accordingly in the shape of a Greek grammar, written entirely in Latin. This extra weight answered the purpose effectually: we were all brought to an immediate standstill.

I have sometimes thought, in a charitable mood, that the compiler of this book—Heaven forgive him! to word it mildly—composed it originally for such students as might be familiar with the tongue in which it was written. My comrades and I were not in that condition. We had to grapple with the difficulties of one unknown tongue

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through the medium of another tongue almost equally unknown. We were, in fact, required to give a determinate solution to an indeterminable problem. We had set us the equation—

$$x + y = 0;$$

and were called upon to give the values of 'x' and 'y' in terms of constants to be manufactured by ourselves. It was the old, old story. Bricks without straw. 'Ye are idle : ' said the taskmasters. So they took away our scanty wisps ; but diminished nought of the tale of bricks as heretofore.

I have heard the system casuistically defended by men who, old prejudices apart, were intelligent and sagacious. 'The abstract rules of grammar,' said they, 'are at first above the comprehension of all children. Even if they be worded in the mother-tongue, it will be long before their true and full significance is apprehended. If, then, these rules be communicated in a strange language, the very difficulty surmounted in committing them to memory will imprint them the more lastingly on their understandings.'

Now, it would occur to me—but my simplicity may be to blame—that, if subjects, concrete or abstract, be beyond a boy's

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comprehension, the less he has to do with them the better. We never ask an errand-boy to 'carry' a weight we know he cannot 'lift.' Might not the communication of such subjects be deferred to a period, when, by a process of training, a boy's intellect were rendered capable of grasping them? Or, again, at the expense of a little time and trouble, might not the majority of grammatical rules be so simply worded, and so familiarly illustrated, as to be brought home to the intelligence of boys of ordinary capacity? I grant the difficulty, if we persist in using unintelligible terms, as *Gerunds*, *Supines*, *Aorists*, and the like; and rules that would be awkwardly enough worded, even if they were correct in substance.

But, for the sake of argument, let us admit the defence put forward for the old system of Elementary Unintelligibility. Then, surely, we may push it to its logical issues. All will allow morality to be higher than grammar. It is, consequently, a more important task to imprint upon the minds of our children the rules of the former than the rules of the latter. But what will serve to imprint indelibly the rules of one science, will serve also to imprint the rules of another; supposing that, for the time, it be

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unnecessary that either set of rules be understood. Then why not communicate the Ten Commandments through the medium of Chinese? Or, if that method be found insufficiently irksome and tedious, why not improve upon the method, by rendering it physically painful? Might we not inculcate each portion of the Decalogue with the aid of a pin, and imprint it upon the memory of childhood by associating it with pricks upon some sensitive portion of the frame? In this simple manner, we might literally fasten a whole system of ethics and grammar upon the bodies as well as the brains of our little ones. The system might be extended to our university course; and a petty domestic instrument might prove a weapon of power in the hands of an energetic professor of chemistry, logic, or metaphysics! Our academic youth would go out into the world, tattooed with the records of their education. A man's own skin—and sometimes even that would be of the old material—would be his portable diploma. In two generations, not a gentleman would sit down to dinner without resting securely upon a cluster of anchors, binding him invisibly to correctness of living, reasoning, and grammar.

But to return to our Greek grammar

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written in Latin. Day after day our clerical Sphynx propounded the mysterious enigma. 'When is a door not a door?' was the simple conundrum that confounded us. It was set us in the language of the Cumæan Sibyl, and the solution was to be given in that of the Pythian Apollo. Day after day a victim fell ;

αἰεὶ δὲ πυραὶ νεκύων καίοντο θαμνισαί.

When I escaped from Thebes, no Œdipus had appeared. I wonder if the Sphynx is at the old work still.

For five years—and five years make a hole in one's school-time, not to say in one's life—for five dreary years the process went on. We committed daily to memory some page or half-page of the sacred but unintelligible book. We revised it, and we re-revised it again and again. To lisp its contents seemed as natural as respiration. We could repeat glibly most perplexing declensions and conjugations ; contracts of all kinds ; changes Attic, Ionic, and Æolic ; verbs in *ω* and verbs in *μι* ; rules of syntax, prosody, and construction, which no one seemed called upon to understand at the time, and to which, in their Latin form, no one was, to my knowledge, ever referred afterwards.

So far did Greek accommodate itself to

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ordinary views, that we occasionally caught glimpses of such familiar friends as 'nouns,' and 'verbs,' and 'prepositions,' and the like. But here the condescension ceased. Ever and anon came looming through the Latin fog strange forms, gigantic, spectral ; Heteroclites, Paradigms, Asynartetuses, Syzygies ; Augments, temporal and syllabic. The former seemed to embody some dim records of a pre-Adamite state ; mystic allusions to bygone Mammoths, Behemoths, Ichthyosauri ; under the latter twain seemed to lurk an allegory of the connexion between Church and State.

It is a grand thing to be conversant with a noble language, unknown to all around us, to our nearest kin. It conveys an undefined idea of wealth and power. We travel where they cannot travel. We visit at great houses, and leave them standing at the door. We stand in sunlight on the hill-top, while they are groping in the valley. We wield with ease a mighty flail of thought, which they cannot uplift with both hands. Yes : we may reasonably be proud of the capability of speaking, maybe of thinking in a foreign tongue. But it is either superlatively sublime, or superlatively ridiculous, to speak for years a language unintelligible to one's-self.

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But before quitting for ever the old Under Form, let me say that my quarrel has been with a system and not with persons. The only unfeeling man, under whom I had been placed, was the genteel clergyman of the riding-whip. My other Masters were good and kindly men, who went according to order through a dull routine, believing in it most probably, and quite powerless from their position, if not also from their abilities, to modify it to any material extent. One of them, before passing further, I must specially recall. He was the only classical Usher ; the only classical authority not in orders ; a tall, gigantically tall and muscular Scotchman, of the name of Ramsay. He was, also, the only classical teacher without a cane. He used a strap ; *Scoticè*, the tawse. Was it because he was only an usher and a layman ? or was it a kindly record of his own more merciful training in his dear native land ? Good soul : even in the using of this innocuous instrument, he kept his elbow on the desk, to spare us the full sweep of his tremendous arm. There was a silly legend current among us, founded only on his physical strength, that the cane had been denied him, after his having once cut unintentionally through a boy's hand,—an idle myth, that wrapped a possi-

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bility in specious falsehood. To see the huge *torso* towering above the comparatively puny desk, it was like the figure-head of a man-of-war. Why, with a cane the man could have hewn a beadle to the chine, and with a birch have minced us mannikins to collops. I wonder if he had an ancestor at Bannockburn: such a one, I could imagine, with a great two-handed sword would have chopped off English heads like turnips. I have an indistinct idea of there having been something very soft and tender in the domestic relations of that biggest and best of ushers.

But, farewell! good, kindly Usher! and farewell! good gentlemen of the Under Form!—ye deserved a better fate than the fate of Sisyphus Æolides.

II. THE UPPER FORM AT ST. EDWARD'S, AND ITS LATIN VERSES

THE upper form consisted of three classes—the Hellenists, or House of Lords ; the Deputy-Hellenists, or House of Commons ; and the Erasmus, or town council, or parish vestry, or patricio-plebeio-non-descript. Those who attained to the second rank generally stayed a year beyond the usual term : four were chosen annually from the second rank for the first ; and these favourites of Fortune remained for three years on the Hellenist class, and then left for one of the Universities, with a valuable exhibition.

The work of the Erasmus was about as tedious and unrefreshing as the old drudgery of the Under Form. That of the Deputies, to which but very few attained, became, as regards the Classics, a very little less tedious by very slow degrees ; but was wholesomely vivified by the introduction of mathematical studies. How delicious, I remember, were the first lessons in geometry and algebra ! they were as draughts of spring-water to lips dry with heat and chapped with sand.

Latin versification began in the Erasmus, was imperative on all, and was continued through the senior classes, whether a pupil's bent of mind were for language or science,

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for verse or prose. To a very few—in which minority, perhaps, I was myself included—it was an amusement, and would have been prosecuted with pleasure, had its study been optional. We members of the minority had each our special beat ; our Crusoe-island, where we reigned unapproached and unapproachable. One would write hexameters, unirradiated by fancy, unblemished by flaw of rhythm or diction ; another would compress epigrams, not devoid of wit, within the narrow limits of the elegiac couplet ; another would attempt a comic flight, with a somewhat square-toed jocosity ; another, with the false taste of enthusiastic youth, would slight the severest models of Latin verse, and spread the ideas of Keats and Shelley over quires of dropsical hexameters and flatulent alcaics. For myself, I would push on patiently through the brakes of Statius and Silius Italicus, to catch one quaintly-dappled epithet. Many a peach-skinned apple, somewhat flavourless to the taste, would I steal from the hot-houses of Claudian. I had a stock of preludes, similes, and perorations, stored away in the pigeon-holes of my brain. Unlike the simple ancients, my forte lay in landscape. I had an extensive assortment of sleeping lakes that mirrored heaven, the emblems of quiet

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souls ; of winds, that rustled over peaceful seas ; of suns, that went down with difficulty through washes of superfluous paint. One sunset I have by me still. It is so gorgeously out of all simple and severe taste, that, could I forget my own handiwork, I should attribute it to the pencil of a Ruskin. As the prelude to an ode on " Lucretia," it gained me a prize in books at school ; as the prelude to an ode on " The Moors in Spain," it gained me a gold medal at Cambridge. I could with ease adapt it, if required, for a peroration to an ode on the " Exhibition of all Nations."

But to return to my prose comrades, who formed an overwhelming majority. Latin versifying was to them a bugbear more appalling than any yet encountered. How tough-grained soever might be their idiosyncrasies of intellect—and, in many cases, the grain was very tough indeed—the wood was tapped for the regular supply of sap. Great importance was attached to the subject ; and still is at all great English schools. I have not the remotest idea why. When we meet with a very odd reading in a Greek play, we presume it is correct, because any copyist would have given a reading more obvious and intelligible. So when we come upon a study of an appa-

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rently impracticable and ludicrous kind, we should hesitate before we condemn it utterly. It is plain that no ordinary brain could have suggested it. It would never have grown up of itself. If it flourish in despite of common sense, there must be a hidden sense that feeds its roots with moisture. There is, doubtless, some unseen power that troubles into usefulness the dull waters of *As in præsentî*; a nymph that rises to the music of a well-turned hexameter, and re-dissolves before the discord of a false quantity. We are catholic in our views of education. There shall be no invidious distinction made between the poor and rich in brain. All our boys shall hammer at the hexameter, as all our girls are kept strumming at the piano. Shall Rugby be denied a mystery that is allowed to every seminary of young ladies? If the theory of Latin versification be inexplicable to woman, what male intelligence could solve the riddle of those globes, whose use is esoterically taught at the humblest of our boarding-schools?

Our apprenticeship to the Latin muses lasted for about two years. Your kitten may reach his full intellectual powers in a few months; but it takes time to form an elephant or a poet. I subjoin a few sets of

THE UPPER FORM AT ST. EDWARD'S
quasi-arranged lines. We had probably
transferred to Latin verse some thousands
of similar sets, before we spread our wings
for original flights.

THE HORSE

The fiery steed, his tail in air proudly cock'd,
Not without much neighing traverses glad pastures.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

To thee, O Alexander—learn, O ye kings, being
admonished—
Glory having been attained, Bacchus was a sad end.

The bee from various flowers sips sweetest honey ;
Speckled as to little body and yellow as to double
legs :

We, too, gather honey on Parnassus, a boyish crowd,
Yellow as to legs and cærulean as to flowing robe.

When duly prepared for more adventurous
effort, we were set to practise upon all the
heroes and sages of antiquity ; upon all
seasons ; upon diverse accidents of fire
and flood ; and the Gradus was our Helicon.
Magnanimus would help Phaëthon on his
hexametrical ride : Alexander was prac-
ticable with a preliminary *fortis* : Hercules
would have been an unmetrical brute but
for his *alias* of Amphitryoniades, that pushed

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out like a promontory half-way across the page.

A Latin couplet might be exchanged for English verse. But it was not often that we took advantage of the permission. The fact is, we had no English Gradus. Our subject one day was *Latro*, or "The Robber." I composed my own couplet in Latin, and furnished a friend with the following English equivalent :

The wicked, lurking robber, when
The harmless traveller passes his den ;
He seizes him by the tail of his coat,
And robs his money and cuts his throat.

I remember also a pair of verses on the subjects "Patroclus" and "The Last Judgment," given in, without the least idea of joking, by a contemporary. The first ran :

Let us mourn, let us mourn, let us mourn for our
friend ;
Let us mourn for our friend and protector ;
Let us mourn, let us mourn, for Patroclus is dead ;
He is kill'd by the man-slaying Hector.

And the second :

What can the righteous man expect,
But to go up to heaven erect ?
What can the wicked man desire,
But to go down to hell-fire ?

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These latter verses were not achieved by a novice. The author had been for years a nursling of the Muses ; and his English song was but an echo of the music of his Latin brother-minstrels. 'Caw, caw,' was all these honest rooks could say. And you might have whistled till you were black in the face before you would have removed the black out of their rook-faces, or the 'caw' out of their husky throats.

In the Hellenic class we advanced to ambitious efforts, epic and lyrical. We all sang ; some bass ; some tenor ; some, Heaven only knows how. One or two of us were very prolific. I plead guilty to having been the juvenile parent of some two thousand Hexameters, and of innumerable Alcaics. I shall plead extenuating circumstances, when I am brought before Rhadamanthus.

Many of my brother Hellenists have nothing to fear from that stern judge. They suffered enough for their misdoings in the actual doing. They were delivered of their poetry with throes that cannot be uttered. I remember the case of one Hellenist in particular. *Il était de feu pour l'algèbre, mais de glace pour le Latin.* In the three Upper Forms he would have had in all probability six or seven years of continuous practice

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in versification. This would not be wholly suspended at the University. In his final examination for honours, he translated the first line of Tennyson's Beggar-maid thus :

"Brachia trans pectus posuit mendica puella."

Now, Reader, I am inclined to think that, before the days of Lucretius, there were very few lines of Latin verse that would throw this one into the shade. I am convinced that Tully never wrote a hexameter that could compare with it. I suppose there are few scholars but would acknowledge that there is an obvious natural want of the *je ne sais quoi* requisite for versification, indicated in the few metrical scraps interspersed in the works of the great Consul. And yet this man was one of the greatest masters of his own language that Italy ever produced. Without a prose literature to build upon, he has left enduring works of state oratory, legal pleading, literary declamation, discursive essays, philosophical treatises, witty letters. He wielded the prose of his native tongue, as Ovid wielded the verse. It was put, a quarter-staff into his hands, and he handled it like a rapier. However, with all the versatility of his genius, and his almost unapproachable dexterity of linguistic manipulation, he

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might have probably gone through all the exercises of Bland, Arnold, and Company without ever producing a single original line with the requisite poetic ring. And yet an English classical master, in a field where Cicero failed, will endeavour, with a native obstinacy, to achieve success with any pupil whatever, be he imaginative or matter-of-fact, musical or timber-tuned ; ay, in a language foreign to both master and pupil, and never spoken by either. There is a courage in the effort, which deserves success.

He *may* achieve certain results, I acknowledge. A pupil, after years of profitless toil, may acquire the mechanical power of wedging together geometric blocks of deal into the form of a hexameter. But the time and trouble wasted on the acquisition of this mechanical dexterity, might have carried him over a broad field of reading in the Classics, or a wide range of scientific study, or through the leading authors of some modern literature. Alas ! my English brethren of the scholastic cloth, how long shall we turn rapidly our gerund-stones, in the vain endeavour to grind sawdust into flour ?

In regard to ancient traditions, scholastic or political, Oxford is usually more Con-

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servative than Cambridge. It is not to the former that we should look for an attack upon Latin Verses, Port Wine, Trial by Jury, the Bench of Bishops, or any of the traditional institutions of our country. However, in regard to the tradition—I may say, superstition—of Latin versification Oxford is in advance of the Sister-university; notwithstanding that she has records of excellence, in this particular line, superior to anything that Cambridge can show. For, leaving to a Merivale the pre-eminence in translating from English into Latin verse, we might search the prize-poems of Cambridge in vain to discover an original Latin poem to compare with the *Cursus Glacialis* in the *Musæ Anglicanæ*.

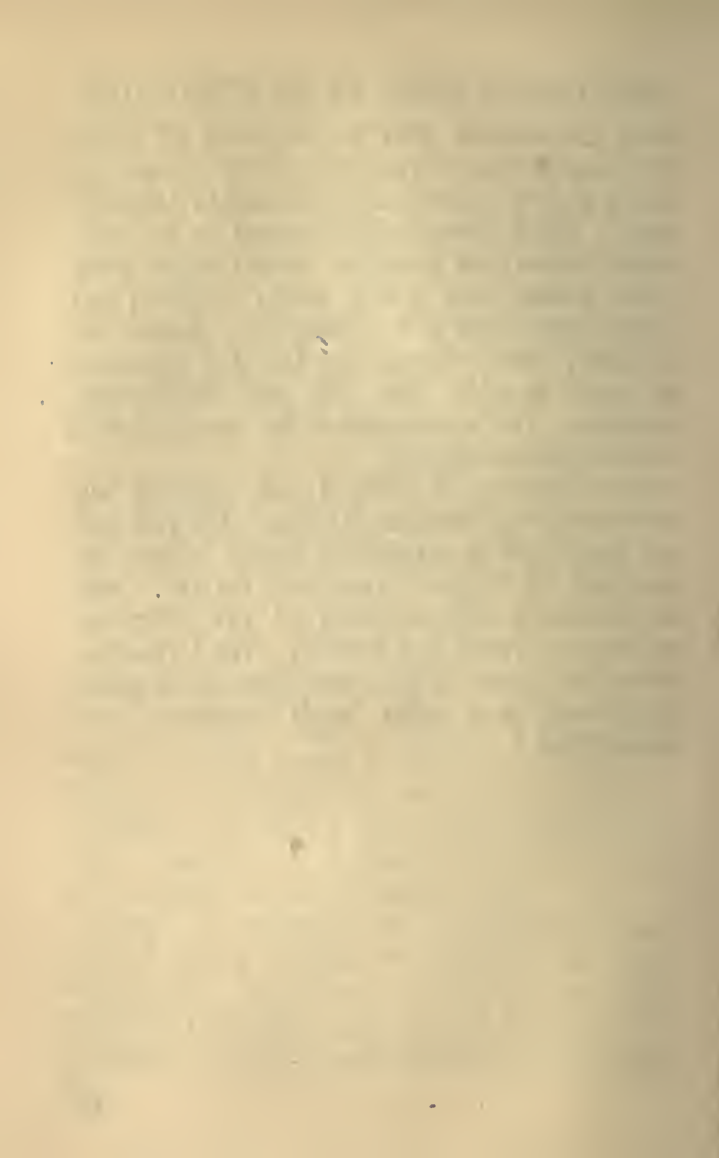
At Oxford, then, the ancient seat of the banished Camœnæ, a copy of Latin verses is said only then 'to pay' when the verses are far above mediocrity. At Cambridge, a graduation of marks may be obtained by verses that range from the ἔπεα πτερόεντα of a Senior Classic to the deal-wedges of the Wooden Spoon.

What a number of uselessly-turning gerund-stones might be arrested in mid-revolution; what an amount of vainly-tortured sawdust might be set free for the stuffing of dolls or pincushions, if it were

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only understood that no amount of mere mechanism in versifying could obtain a mark at any examination in either University ! Such a regulation would in no way affect those few scholars who cannot read their Greek and Latin poets without an occasional, and not irreverent, desire to imitate ; but it would set free the energies of their prosier, but not less intelligent, brethren, for employment in more useful and congenial studies.

But, Reader, I fear I am jogging on unconsciously towards Utopia. Do you not see that such a regulation would imply, on the part of Public Examiners on the Cam, an exquisite appreciation of the differentialities of Verse and Prose ? Ah ! Reader, it were an easy task to examine our Undergraduates ; but who shall examine our Examiners ?



III. THE HELLENISTS

I HAVE been dubbed Hellenist. Nay, never start, Reader : I am too proud to be conceited. There : you need not stand uncovered. I am invested with the Latin Order of the Garter, and the Greek Order of the Golden Fleece. I am standing on a peak in Darien, and staring at a new Pacific, broad and blue, wherein lie happy islands. I have reached the zenith of all boyish hopes : surely, henceforth, my path will slope downwards to the grave. I am self-poised, self-centred. All pettiness of vanity is swallowed up in an absorbing contentment and pride. For three years I shall pace the old, shadowy cloisters ; then for as many years shall I walk the garden of Academus ; and then pass into the great world by one of two roads : and at the end of one road I can dimly see men with grey wigs and silk gowns ; and at the end of the other, a circle of reverend Elders with white lawn-sleeves. O Phaëthon, Phaëthon, your head is turning giddy !

To descend, then, from my dizzy flight. I am in the middle of my seventeenth year. I have had nine years of classical drilling. All that I have as yet learnt might very easily, indeed, have been acquired, had I

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commenced in my thirteenth instead of in my eighth year, and had the system of instruction been natural and easy instead of being unnatural and difficult. This I state unhesitatingly, after having twice carried a class through the whole of a school curriculum of seven years.

Had it been my lot now to leave school, I should have carried away a rather pleasant remembrance of my first usher, and an affectionate remembrance of but one master, Delille. It was only in the Hellenist class that I came to love and venerate Rice, to love and admire Webster. Speaking from the light of subsequent experience, I believe no school in the world ever had, or ever will have, a trio of masters to surpass the trio I here mention. Let me pause for a moment, to portray them in few but loving words.

Delille, our master of French, was a tall and powerfully-built man, with a fresh and ruddy complexion, and a manly carriage. His temper was imperturbably good : his sense of humour infectious. He had no vulgar instrument of punishment ; but, by his noble presence, and the unseen force of his character, he could maintain the strictest order in classes numbering above a hundred pupils. He spoke our language without a

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flaw of accent ; it was only by an occasional hyper-correctness of ' hither ' for ' here ' that one could detect the foreigner. His classes were held out of the usual school hours, sometimes even on half-holidays ; and for all that, they were the pleasantest classes in the under school. His severest mode of punishing was to set a fable of La Fontaine to be committed to memory. You were not released until it had been repeated without one single break ; and you generally left him, exasperated a little at the loss of play, but laughing perforce at some grave piece of badinage with which he had dismissed you.

I knew him afterwards as a friend, and guest, and host. And what a companion he was at table or over a cigar ! He was, like his compatriots, a *bon-vivant* ; and as good a judge of wine as any member of a London club. He had a splendid voice for declamation or singing ; was an admirable after-dinner speaker in either French or English ; could sing a song of Lover's with a rich Irish brogue ; a song of Burns' with all the subtlety of its pure, sweet accent ; and roll out a sea-song of Dibdin's like a sailor ! Had I never esteemed him as a master, I should have liked him as an accomplished man of the world and a

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delightful companion. With a number of University friends, I once dined with him at his house in Ely Place. I still remember the four kinds of Champagne that were broached at dinner ; the Chambertin that flowed freely afterwards with the flow of wit and good-humour ; the music in the drawing-room, and the singing from ballad, opera, and oratorio ; the hour at midnight in the snug library ; a fuming bowl and irreproachable cigars ; and I remember, as my cab drove me to the Tavistock, that the lamps of Holborn showed through the window like mad and merry dancing stars. Alas ! I am writing of one whose hand I shall never grasp again, for cordial welcome or regretful farewell.

Of Webster I cannot speak at such length ; and happily for the best of reasons : he is not, like his two colleagues, a memory alone. But I shall never forget how contagious was his zeal for work ; how impetuously chivalrous was his character ; how thorough his respect for industry ; how unmistakable his abhorrence of shuffling and sloth. And I remember thinking, at times, when I looked up from a remarkably white hand on the desk to a handsome and proud and almost haughty face before me, that my clerical Master should have been a courtly

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Abbé, and have sat in hall with prince and gentle ladye.

And Burney—dear old Burney, as we used to call our Head-master—how feeble would be any words to describe our fondness for that dear, white head ! The Doctor was a noble type of the old-fashioned English Head-master. He had a loathing for all scientific study ; was utterly ignorant of modern languages : indeed, I believe, he looked upon Delille as the only Frenchman that had ever been reclaimed from greasy cookery and sour claret to a repentant but honest appreciation of roast-beef and port wine. English literature of the day to him was non-existent ; his lectures smacked of the last century, with their long undulating periods, and pauses Ciceronian. He was the fellow-student rather than the master of his Hellenists. Patiently would he pore over their exercises, in the lighted study that sent a melancholy gleam into the long, dark school-room. All information, historical, antiquarian, geographical, or philosophic, as connected with the classics, he regarded with contempt : any dunderhead, he considered, might cram that at his leisure : but it pained him to the quick if a senior pupil violated the Porsonian pause, or trifled with a subjunctive. ‘ A word in

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your ear, Doctor,' said an Oxford examiner once to him; 'your Captain yesterday could not tell me where Elis was!' 'I looked horrified,' said the Doctor, in repeating the circumstance; 'I looked horrified, of course; but, on my word, I did not know it myself. But,' continued he, 'these Oxford fellows like this kind of thing; but I'll wager you'd get few of them to write a good Porson.'

Like all simple and unworldly natures, he was generous to a fault. He would have given anything, forgiven anything to a good Greek scholar. The boys of the Under School feared him as a strict and resolute and severe disciplinarian. We, his Hellenists, knew that, while he followed, unquestioningly, old Draconian laws, his heart was of the kindest and softest and tenderest. How the old man, that could look so stern at times, would weep, when an old pupil went wrong at college; with what unrepublishing kindness he would help him out of difficulties, into which idleness or extravagance or misfortune might have plunged him. How like a father he would welcome him, when all errors had been retrieved by the winning of an honourable place in the list of final honours. 'You must remember, Sir, that my place is due to

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you ; that but for your help last summer, I could not have returned for long-vacation reading.' 'Nonsense,' replied the Doctor ; 'I remember nothing of the kind ; but I'll remember long enough the place you held in the classical Tripos.'

And he, to whom he thus spake, and I, who am now writing, and all who had the honour of belonging to the class of his Hellenists, will remember him with love and gratitude and reverence to the end ; ay, to the end.

And now, Reader, why should I give a description of the Hellenist class ? With three such Masters, and a set of comrades most of whom were enthusiastic students, and all of whom were pleasant fellows, how could a triennium fail to be an industrious and a happy one ?—It was the reign of Antoninus Pius in my school-life, and needs no chronicling.



IV. THE CREW OF ULYSSES

YES, Reader, I am Hellenist. I am at the end of my third volume, and am going to live happy ever afterwards. I have reached Ithaca. A little tired and battered. But I have reached Ithaca. I will now take mine ease by mine own hearth, and spin long yarns about Scylla and Charybdis. But where are my old comrades? Poor fellows! they are all drowned. They are lying at the bottom of that Ægean, which in life was the scene of all their suffering, and the reservoir of all their geography.

The fact is, it was only in exceptional cases, that boys with us remained at school after the age of fifteen. Consequently, my old friends were all away. They had gone for the most part into commercial life. Fortunately, one-half of their schooling had been devoted to the despised branches of penmanship, ciphering, reading, and writing from dictation. These subjects had been very well taught. Indeed, had they been taught ever so indifferently, the pupils could scarcely have failed to pick up something in such elementary branches during a curriculum of at least seven years. Consequently, in the various counting-houses into which they were draughted, our boys

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were usually found good penmen, ready reckoners, and tolerably correct in their spelling. But of one entire half of their long school probation, the majority carried away no intellectual memento. Upon that half had been brought to bear the most expensive part of the educational machinery; masters of arts instead of ushers; clergymen instead of laymen; dictionaries and lexicons instead of copy-books and slates. There had been no lack of sowing; but there had been no reaping; no gathering into barns: although, Heaven knows! the ground had been well harrowed, and the seed had been watered plentifully, and with tears.

I must state in passing, that there was a naval school into which boys might enter, at their own option, about the age of twelve. Many, that had no special calling for a sailor's life, entered it with the mere view of escaping a life of Latin and Greek drudgery on dry land. This part of the school had been added to the original foundation by Charles II. Every year a little deputation presents at Court its charts and drawings, in accordance with the expressed wish of the royal founder. I believe in no portion of the kingdom is a course of naval instruction given so perfect in both practice and theory.

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My contemporaries of the ordinary Under Form, who survive, will be now in the prime of manhood. Do they ever look calmly back upon the miraculous fog, that overhung one half of their seven years' schooling? Have they ever expiscated one intelligible reason why they were so long detained in the barren wilderness? What good have they ever reaped themselves from the trial; or, what gratification can it have afforded to others? Or, seems that period to them an embryostate; a dream within a dream? Some of them will now be Benedicks; some will have boys growing into their teens. Our species, like the sheep, is prone to follow a lead. I would venture to affirm, that these fathers will, in most instances, be putting their boys through some similarly mysterious educational process.

The fact is, men usually look back upon their school-days, as a pedestrian upon traversed, far-off, blue hills. *He* forgets the long, desolate moorlands; the tortuous pathways; the morasses here and the shingles there; the peak on peak, that never was the highest. *They* forgive, over the walnuts and the wine, the pedagogue that thrashed them to no moral or mental profit; the bully, that appropriated their weekly sixpence; the old house-keeper,

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that worried them with nig-nagging for their torn linen, or for faces dirtier than their dirty shoes. School was not such a bad place after all. Another glass or two of the old, tawny particular ; and, faith ! we were never so happy as in our boyhood, and may never be as happy again. Besides, boys are terribly in the way at home ; and school is the real place for them after all ; and, depend upon it, if there were no virtue in birching, caning, Latin verses and Greek what-ye-may-call-'ems, they would not have held their ground so long amongst a practical people like ourselves. So Johnny is sent to the Town Grammar School, and returns in due time with as much honey of Hymettus on his legs, as his father before him. And meanwhile, the great, time-honoured gerund-stone turns, and will turn to the last syllable of recorded time.

In the majority of great English Public Schools, the primary subjects of writing, ciphering, reading, and spelling, are notoriously ill taught. The chief modern languages, French and German, languish in the cold shade of their classic rivals. And yet, elementarily, they are taught on a more rational plan than the Classics. That is to say, the rules of nature or common sense are not wholly ignored ; and the conversa-

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tional, *vivâ voce* principle is to some extent kept in view. But success in these departments carries with it no acknowledged prestige; paves the way to no brilliant University distinction. Too frequently, also, a master of French is a master of French only, with no more claims to learning than a *chef de cuisine*; and too often a master of German will mar the effect of his erudition by a philosophic but frowsy disregard of toilet-proprieties. And alas! a foreigner, however learned and well-mannered, too often fails in the maintenance of discipline, from the fact that the idea of order is, to his pupils, inseparably connected with a vigorous use of implements, which are barbarous in his eyes and ridiculous in his hands.

However, be the condition of other branches what you please, the melancholy fact stands, that the Classics are taught in such a way as to benefit only those who, by superior talents or inordinately long continuance at school, eventually emerge from the darkness overhanging their elementary training. I could enumerate three historical and well-endowed metropolitan schools, to which, in my day, even this latter exceptional statement was not due.

In the Under School at St. Edward's we certainly understood the husbandry of

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making a very little Greek go a very long way. We sank our teaching plummet many fathoms deep in the abyss of Unintelligibility. But the historical trio had tumbled through the antipodes to the nadir, where they were sticking like rayless stars. There were honey-prizes, in the way of Exhibitions and Scholarships attached to these drone-hives : they must have been assigned to such drones as were found pre-eminent in weight or size or capacity of repose.

At the best of the great Public Schools, the youngest children—bless the innocents !—are suckled upon grammar ; the more advanced are too often fed upon dull books, made duller by superfluous annotations ; the manuals for prose composition are in many cases tramways to pedantry, exhibiting for imitation the unintentional faults of Thucydides and the intentional faults of Tacitus ; the manuals for Latin versification would seem to have been originally intended to implant in boys a quick perception of the ludicrous. A vile system of literal translation of Greek and Latin idioms so corrupts the well of English undefiled, that a boy often loses as much English in his Latin room, as he will pick up for the day in his English one. No one, after once the sentences had been analysed,

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would ever dream of translating literally *Comment vous portez-vous ?* or, *Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça ?* but pedantry will insist upon boys rendering, year after year, Greek particles by the most un-English equivalents, and Latin redundancies by English wind. The whole system, and the elementary part most of all, is bookish, unpractical. It is many years—nay, very often it does not happen at all,—it is many years, at all events, before a lad suspects that Latin and Greek are instruments of thought precisely similar to his own everyday language. In the earlier years of his apprenticeship, he would almost scout the idea as profane, that men could under any circumstances exchange chit-chat ; write love-letters ; deliver after-dinner speeches ; tell Joe Millers ; make bad puns in such solemn and stiff-jointed forms of speech. Indeed, they never strike him as forms of speech at all. He may entertain a hazy idea that Latin was employed by a Roman tradesman for composing an Elegiac valentine, or an advertisement in Alcaics. Its grammatical nomenclature is worded differently from that of any modern tongue ; and that for Greek is worded more cabalistically still. He meets with no Aorists in English ; no Supines in French ; no Gerunds in German ; no Paulo-post-futures anywhere

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in the habitable world. And yet I will venture to say, that there are very few idioms of either Greek or Latin that have not their analogues in homely Saxon and pure French. Indeed, I am almost inclined to think that the use of *ἀν* in Greek is the only idiom to which it would be difficult or impossible to adduce a parallel. Why on earth, then, are the former pair swathed in a verbiage so peculiar? I can understand the use of a peculiar nomenclature in days when the theory of language was imperfectly understood; and I freely acknowledge the debt of gratitude due to the old grammarians for raising the structure before us, with the scanty materials at their disposal. Latin was then considered as radically different from Greek, as Greek from Coptic. Ay, and might be considered so now, for all the teaching in our schools. The magnificent, cloud-dispelling discoveries of Bopp and the Grimms, so full of interest if gradually and clearly expounded, to young and old alike, are in most class-rooms practically ignored. We still separate by arbitrary boundaries studies that we know, or should know, to be cognate. If Latin, Greek, and Teutonic are really sisters, and French a daughter of one of them, why should it be thought impossible to teach

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them all upon some catholic plan? At the very least, the grammatical terms employed in one school-room might be employed in another. Take, for instance, such a simple sentence as, 'I should like to know.' If a boy were called upon to parse such a sentence in three consecutive class-rooms, he would find a Conditional mood in the French room, a Subjunctive one in the Latin, and an Optative one in the Greek. A very Proteus of a mood; now a bear; now crackling fire; now running water, that slips through one's fingers.

I am convinced in my own mind that it were practicable to teach English, French, German, Latin, and Greek on a broad and catholic system. The first step would be for the patrons of our great schools to require of every candidate for a classical mastership satisfactory proofs of a thorough knowledge of French or German, or even of both languages, in grammar and accent. If a good classical scholar were found deficient in the latter particular, he might be advised to travel abroad, to cure his ear and his tongue of their insular vulgarity. In a few years, a scholar would as soon think of speaking French with a bad accent as of eating peas with a knife. A class might pass from language to language,

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retaining its shape and the position of its members; upon the principle that it was merely passing from one to another phase of one great and comprehensive subject. Thus, the places in a class of English, French, or German, would be thrown in with those of Latin and Greek at the end of a session, to determine the prizes for proficiency in the broad and catholic study of the dialects of one common language. The Classics would benefit by the amalgamation, as they would have to be treated less mysteriously, and illustrated more interestingly; and to modern languages would be given a prestige in the eyes of the pupils, which they have hitherto most unquestionably and most undeservedly lacked.

To some the amalgamation proposed may seem one of incongruities. It is not so. It is much more incongruous to mix the study of modern history with the study of Latin and Greek, than to associate the study of one language with that of another cognate language, in the determination of class places. A boy may have a special turn for history and the acquisition of general information, who is comparatively slow at linguistic studies. But a good scholar in Latin and Greek will be a good scholar in French and German—if he choose. I

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have known lamentable instances of good classical scholars neglecting purposely, and for sordid reasons connected with school prizes, the study of modern languages ; but I could also point to separate class-lists where the same names, almost in the same order, stood as prizemen in four languages, ancient and modern ; and this would be found generally the case, if some such system as the one suggested were adopted.

With such a system in operation, the pedantic phraseology of our classical manuals would have to be modified, of course ; the examples to the majority of rules to be pitched in a lower and more natural key. We have, at present, a genteel and superstitious dread not only of solecisms, but of commonness in expression ; forgetting, most unphilosophically, that the vulgar tongue is in all cases the real tongue ; that where we can hear a language in its pure, unadulterated vulgarity,—and any one but a Bagman knows the term is not necessarily synonymous with coarseness or slang,—there have we in Italy a correcter language than the polished diction of Ovid ; and in England more home-spun stuff than can be drawn from Pope and Gray. Such a line, for instance, as

Cujus ebur nitidum fastigia summa tegebat,

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might be justified in Ovid, on the score of difficulty in adapting his language to a foreign metre ; but the collocation of the words is obviously wrong either for Latin or for any language. Again, such a line as

Utendum est *ætate* : cito pede præterit *ætas*,

is exquisitely worded. But the former part of the line is only right according to the rules of fashionable grammar, or that of analogy and imitation, and wrong according to the rules of 'real' grammar. The poet's valet would never have committed the blunder ; he would never have assigned to the active *utendum* the government of the reflective *uti*. He would no more have thought of attaching an abnormal case to an ordinary verb, than of pinning a verb to his tunic.

In our servile admiration of what is falsely called purest Latin, our hankering after Augustan elegancies, we lose sight of the homely, conversational treasures that might be extracted copiously from Plautus, less copiously from Terence, and to some extent, if we taught Latin as we ought to teach it, from our own brains. If, by the adoption of a *vivâ voce* conversational method in elementary classes, a pupil once got a

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natural, unconscious grip of Latin, style and polish would follow easily enough, as the method gradually became more searching, critical, and analytic. In our own language, we never illustrate early lessons by elaborately-poised sentences from Robertson or Gibbon; but with random speech; familiar instances; common saws. We wait patiently until the pupil gets a tight hold of his subject, before we call upon him to wield it with rhetorical effect. A round single-stick suffices for the first rude lessons in the use of the trenchant broadsword. So in the illustration of the rules of Latin syntax, I would advocate the use of familiar everyday sentences, such as a boy might carry about with him as unconsciously as he does his jacket. I should not be afraid to employ many a word that might be searched for in vain in the pages of Cicero, or even in the dull pages of a dictionary; to let pass uncorrected many a phrase that would send a shudder through an Augustan precisian. In fact, I should treat Latin and Greek as though I were not in the least afraid of them; as though there were no special linguistic secrets wrapped within their mantles; as though they were simple, honest, straightforward languages, like the

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one spoken without conscious effort by our own street ragamuffins.

So far, however, from ignoring the value of style and finish, I should merely be deferring their inculcation until I could inculcate them with effect. It seems labour thrown away to demonstrate that 'this' is more elegant than 'that,' when 'this' and 'that' are both imperfectly understood.

Again, at present, ere a boy by the glimmering light of a misty dictionary, or the reflected light of his solar tutor, can grope through the involutions of an ordinary paragraph, he is pushed into works that would probably little interest him, could they be perused as easily as his own Robinson Crusoe. Cornelius Nepos and Sallust are two special bugbears. Cæsar is not wholly blameless. I can well imagine a scholar-like soldier or historian reading the latter with pleasure and profit. But, apart from the difficulty of frequently-recurring indirect speeches, his narrative, with all its soldier-like simplicity and directness, is too extended for boys who can only read it in detachments. We ourselves could enjoy no landscape, however beautiful, that we saw only in separate rounds through a paper tube. But who will stand bail for those other notoriously old offenders? What

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grown man, though reeking with Latin, would give an evening hour to the twaddle of the one, or the pedantry of the other? And what versatility of human wit could render either interesting to children in miserable, daily pittances of eight lines? which eight lines would have first to be tortured into villainous English; then parsed, word by word; the nouns all declined; the verbs all conjugated:—a ruminative process:—then, after pausing to take breath, we should begin again at the end, and reverse the order of proceeding; running backwards through the verbs, and backwards through the nouns. And so on, *ad nauseam*.
O dura pueror' ilia!

V. ON CLIMBING

IMAGINE yourself, Reader, in an elementary class-room, and before you a semicircle of some fifty little recruits upon the benches, with their brain-pans newly primed with the singular of *penna*. 'Make ready!—present!!—fire!!!' and pop go the fire-arms. But what a scattered volley! Some, it is true, discharge their six rounds with precision; but some are firing off their ablatives half a minute behind their comrades, and some poor unfortunates of the awkward squad have missed fire at their genitive shot.

Follow me now, Reader, through the scenes of our ordinary Latin drama. The subject-matter of the play is a somewhat confused one: if, therefore, in the description I indulge in a Castlereagh-medley of metaphors, the fault is in the subject, and not in myself.

The singular of *penna* is our rehearsal for to-day, with that of a few similar nouns: the plural of the same will come to-morrow: on the day following the singular and plural in combination. Then in order will come *dominus* and suite; then *puer* and ditto; then *liber* and ditto; and so on, until we pause with *dies* and *res*.

Then separately and in order will stalk

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across the stage, *bonus, bona, bonum; mitis, mite; felix*; with their three legs, and two legs, and one leg. Then come their invidious comparatives, and their bombastic superlatives. Then the pronouns; then an active verb of the first conjugation, as *amo*; then, actives of the other conjugations in order, as *moneo, rego, audio*; then the verb *sum*; then the passives in due order; then adverbs, numerals, prepositions, conjunctions.

Now I shall quit the stage, and set you down to dinner, at our *pièce de resistance*, Syntax. Thin separate slices are taken day by day without vegetables, bread, or salt; they will, consequently, remain upon the stomach; will cause, certainly, indigestion; will, possibly, leave a chronic irritation of the mucous membrane.

Back, Reader, to the stage. The foot-lights are dimmed, and the actors are groping their way through the defiles of *Propria quæ maribus*, and *As in præsentî*—

“Lasciate ogni speranza, voi, che 'ntrate.”

Thus our class is taken through the pages and chapters of its grammar, with its attention riveted exclusively on its daily lesson; on its daily square yard of Latin. It is a process somewhat analogous to that of traversing a dictionary, by stages, from A to

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Z. Or it may be considered as a process of stratification, applied to the administering of mental food. And yet, physically, no man would ever take his dinner in separate layers of beef and potatoes and bread ; and no elderly gentleman would take his punch in separate instalments of rum and water and sugar and lemon-peel. Or again, it may be considered as a process of bolting mental food in lumps ; which process, physically, is not conducive to digestion.

I acknowledge that the system, wooden as it is, produces, or fails to hinder, some good results in pupils of high intelligence after a course of four or five years' teaching ; because intelligence in boyhood *will* twist through obstacles into knowledge, as a branch does into sunlight ; and common sense in manhood *will* at times slip off the grooves that routine may have laid down. But, with an easier and more interesting method, I assert that, after a similar period, the more intelligent might have done far more, and the less intelligent a great deal ; whereas, at present, the more intelligent do very little, and the less intelligent next to nothing.

But it will be said, that there is no *regia via* to knowledge ; that the latter is found only at the summit of the Hill of

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Difficulty ; which we may never reach by walking on a level road. True : but there are more ways than one of ascending a hill ; and the one which seems the shortest, is often found the longest ; and he who tries it, often meets midway with some insuperable difficulty, and is forced to retrace his steps, and recommence the ascent by an easier and less fatiguing route. Instead of breasting a steep hill, and pushing upwards in a line, gazing only at the heath or shingles at my feet, I should prefer taking long circuitous bends, to lessen the angle of ascent ; and, as the labour would thus be rendered less exhaustive, I should be enabled on my way to enjoy the expanding prospect ; to watch the sailing clouds above, and the valley and the lake spread underneath. In this way I have climbed Skiddaw and Ben Lomond without over-fatiguing myself : I tried Ben Rattachan by the other way, unsuccessfully ; and paid dearly for the attempt.

So, in the study of a language, I acknowledge that there is an ascent to be made ; but I hold it my duty, as a guide, to point out to the pedestrians under my charge such a pathway as may present the angle of least inclination.

In the declensions and conjugations—say,

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of Latin—as we find them, there is so much of phonetic corruption, that the changes of termination may be, for a while at least, regarded as arbitrary. Had we them presented to us in their primitive form, memory would be little needed, and judgment would do almost all our work. As it is, memory is here absolutely required. The declensions and conjugations, then, must be committed to memory ; at first, unreasoningly ; we must wait awhile, before we give the solution to the riddles of their inflexions ; some, perhaps, we shall have to leave unsolved. The rules of gender also, and the commonly recurring exceptions, must be similarly learned ; they may be compressed within a page and a half of an ordinary octavo. We may, reasonably, take it for granted that a young student of Latin is capable of analysing an ordinary sentence in his own language : that, in the following sentences—

- (1) This is my father's hat :
- (2) He loved his brother :
- (3) He gave me nothing :
- (4) This is the house that Jack built :
- (5) There is no saying :

he will understand that

(1) ' My ' is in the possessive case, as agreeing with the possessive ' father's ' ;

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That (2) 'his brother' is an accusative or 'primary object' after 'loved' ;

That (3) 'nothing' is accusative after 'gave' ; and 'me,' dative or 'secondary object' ;

That (4) 'the house' is nominative after 'is,' a verb of existence ; and 'that,' although referring to a nominative, itself an accusative after the active-transitive verb 'built' ;

That (5) 'saying,' although spelt as a participle, is a verbal noun, or a noun coined out of a verb, and in reality the nominative to 'is,' and only put after it for convenience, in consequence of the intrusion of the superfluous and anticipatory word, 'there.'

Unless a pupil shall know thus much, and a good deal more, of the grammar of his own language, it would seem to me to partake of the nature of folly or cruelty to push him into the syntax of a foreign one.

Taking for granted, then, such preliminary knowledge in our novice, the difficulties of Latin syntax are wonderfully lessened. The great majority of its rules he is already acquainted with : they are common to that syntax of simple rules, by which he should daily parse, with his Latin Master, his paragraph of English. He will find that there are after all but very few rules of syntax in

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Latin, which might not be applied to his own tongue. He will, however, see that, in Latin, an adjective is not invariable in its spelling as with us ; but partakes of the nature of the mocking-bird, and imitates, musically but not always usefully, its noun in gender, number, and case. He will observe, also, that with nouns, Latin expresses many things—such as ‘ the manner, how ; ’ ‘ the means, by which ; ’ ‘ the time, when ’—by case-endings, which things English usually expresses by prepositions ; in other words, that Latin uses ‘ tight affixes,’ where we prefer ‘ loose prefixes.’ But he will see that English also has its tight affixes in such words as ‘ father’s,’ ‘ him,’ ‘ them,’ ‘ whom,’ ‘ loves,’ ‘ loveth,’ ‘ loving,’ ‘ loved.’ So, even in this respect, he will see that there is a partial agreement between modern English and ancient Latin, which at first seemed so totally different. And I will now hint to him, and by and by will prove to him, that his own language had once as many tight affixes as Latin, but dropped them by degrees ; just as Latin did, as it merged into what is now called Italian.

It will very probably, then, be found that such Latin syntax, as he may be called upon to commit to memory, may be compressed within at most two pages. The rules for

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prosody should, I consider, be expunged *in toto* from his grammar. All that is necessary herein may be communicated orally by a Master, in the scansion of lines, from day to day, when his class comes to read Ovid, or Virgil, or Horace. Indeed, the analysis of noun and verb terminations, carried on from day to day, will gradually explain upon reasonable grounds almost all abnormal quantities. I think it would be difficult to bring forward in Latin half a dozen long vowels, final or otherwise, which could not be explained on the principle of the blending of vowels or the softening of a consonant. I have tried this oral method twice with two sets of upper classes, of which I had the divided, though subordinate, charge, and can furnish full proofs of its success.

The numerals also must be committed to memory, and may be so committed in at most two lessons. To learn by rote long strings of prepositions or conjunctions is to my mind worse than useless. They should be communicated orally, gradually; like kindly gifts, stealthily. Thus, upon examination, we find that all that requires unreasoning memory may be reduced to the following heads:

- (1) The five declensions, which include all adjectives and participles.

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(2) The rules for gender, and exceptions :

(3) The four conjugations, active and passive, which latter voice includes *sum* :

(4) The irregular verbs, *eo, volo, nolo, malo, possum* :

(5) Syntax ; two pages.

All this might easily be comprehended within twenty-four octavo pages. It is only a hillock of difficulty. But instead of climbing right up the face of it—for the sides may be very steep, though the summit be within rifle-range—I should guide a pupil by the sinuous and not uninteresting path, along which I beg of you, Reader, to accompany me in the next chapter.

VI. FROM PENNA TO POSSUM

I SHALL suppose myself to have a class of about fifty little fellows seated before me, impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and carrying each the bâton of a School-marshal in his pocket. I shall take it for granted that they have had a previous training of two years at some one or other of the excellent preparatory schools of our own Dunedin ; and that this training has been wisely confined to English grammar, spelling, reading, and elementary arithmetic ; and not mischievously extended to Latin rudiments for the muddling of their as yet imperfect ideas of English. I shall also suppose that they are all ten years of age, with a margin on either side.

Under these circumstances I should commence operations ; and it would be my earnest endeavour from this first lesson to the last they should receive from me, to disrobe their new language little by little of its mysterious integuments, and, if possible, to prove it in the end to be composed of the same flesh and blood and bones as their own Teuton mother-tongue.

For a week or so I should content myself with probing their knowledge of English grammar ; and from time to time I should draw their attention to those few inflexional

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course, those stupid neuter nouns could hardly expect them—and that it was only in modern times that nouns, indiscriminately, had been treated worse than terrier-puppies, and lopped into guinea-pigs and Manx cats.

And thus for a week or so, under cover of our parallels of English parsing, should we approach, gradually and warily, the Sebastopol of our Latin Grammar. And, meanwhile, on one of our public days, some parents of my pupils would pay my class a visit ; and one of them, perhaps, returning home would say that he could not understand my method : which would very probably be true : and that he should remove his boy from my class at the close of the current quarter : which he would very probably do : perhaps, not to the great benefit of his boy.

At length we open our grammar and commence with *penna*. Its singular consists of six words. When these had been thoroughly committed to memory by each and every pupil, I should request them to limit their attention for the present to the three cases—

The Nominative,
The Genitive or Possessive, and
The Ablative :

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and I should request them to write down on their memories, or in a copy-book, if they preferred, these three cases for the following nouns—

puella,

aqua,

ala,

aquila,

matrona,

ancilla ;

and the same for the adjectives—

bona,

mala,

candida,

nigra,

pessima,

optima ;

and by means of these, and the simple word *est* we might form scores of sentences. These sentences might be varied by placing two nouns together, as, *ala aquilæ* or *aquilæ ala* : we might then throw in two prepositions *in* and *cum*, governing the ablative ; and a pupil would thus, in one lesson, be furnished with verbal machinery for forming sentences without number ; common familiar sentences, such as he might use at dinner-table or in the playground, if he chose.

In due time let us take the plural of *penna*, and that of the six similar nouns, and of the six feminine adjectives ; and decline them with adjectives in combination with nouns, till each and every pupil has them

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at his finger-ends; and let us revise the lesson of the previous day. Now, then, let us throw in the word *sunt*, and a few adverbs of common occurrence in ordinary talk; as *nunc*, *tunc*, *semper*, *nunquam*; and repeat, with our extended vocabulary, the *vivâ voce* process of the preceding day or days.

Let our next lesson be the singular and plural of *penna*; with the singular of *dominus*. Let us now decline, like the latter, six familiar nouns; and the masculines of the adjectives before mentioned; and pause awhile to illustrate the echoing propensities of a Latin adjective: then let us throw in one or two more familiar adverbs, and proceed with our *vivâ voce*, as before.

For the next day, let us be similarly engaged with the plural of *dominus* and the like nouns and adjectives; and for our *vivâ voce* throw in the masculines and feminines of the following participles—

amatus,
culpatus,
laudatus,

fractus,
monitus,
auditus:

remembering that, hitherto, in our spoken sentences, we are limited to the use of the three originally specified cases.

When I reach *regnum*, I may throw in the neuters of all the adjectives and par-

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ticiples hitherto used ; and, meanwhile, we may have introduced the present tense of "sum," and additional adverbs or adverbial expressions from time to time.

Thus, on arriving at the end of the second declension, we shall have a somewhat extensive vocabulary ; and by a skilful use of it we may vary our spoken sentences almost *ad infinitum*.

By and by, the present tense of *amo* should be introduced, with that of a few similar verbs ; and we should then call in simultaneously the accusatives of all our declinable words to follow active-transitive verbs.

The indicative mood of *sum* and *amo* might thus be introduced, by instalments, before we reached the end of the fifth declension. And meanwhile our attention would have been confined entirely to nouns regular in inflexion and gender : the irregulars being left to be incorporated in due time.

While the declensions were being rigorously committed to memory, we should almost imperceptibly be throwing in preposition, adverb, or tense, that would enable the pupil to use his little store of declined words almost as soon as he acquired it. We should in fact have used our declensions as the boiling water, and the extraneous

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words as our oatmeal ; and by scattering in the latter gradually and in thinnest streams, and adding such *sales* as were at hand, we should probably have provided a porridge not wholly indigestible.

We should now proceed to our verbs. They would now be transmuted to the water, and the nouns to component parts of the oatmeal. Three tenses per diem would, probably, be our allowance ; but to every tense we should append strings of examples, and would be gradually increasing our vocabulary of words, and using those numerous rules of syntax, in which Latin is in harmony with English. It would be as well to classify our nouns, as we introduced them. One day we might attach to one or two well-conned verbs the names of trees or flowers ; similarly, we might make our pupils familiar with the names of beasts and birds and fishes ; the articles of ordinary furniture in a Roman dwelling ; the parts and rigging of a ship ; terms military ; terms of courtesy ; degrees of consanguinity : not mapping out our proceedings on all occasions, but following nature and impulse ; and we should, doubtless, find their guidance more direct than that of any trumpery *Delectus* in existence.

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And all the while, we should be endeavouring to deceive our little fellows, by concealing from them the real amount of their increasing stores. So long as we abstained from using a pedantic and dull grammar, we should easily deceive, in this respect, a number of their parents, who would be firmly persuaded that their children were learning nothing. For in the minds of many people, education is inseparably connected with the idea of difficulty and tediousness. They imagine that a great deal must be accomplishing, when painful efforts are being made. They find a grim satisfaction in the feeling of obstruction. So, when you row a boat against the stream, you hear the water ruckling at the prow, and you feel virtue go out of you at every sweep of the oar ; and the boat is almost stationary. But, when you row with the current, you hear no noise of rippling ; you scarcely feel your oar ; and the boat is gliding like a swan.

Some such method as that above—and remember, a *vivâ voce* method can, at the best, be drawn in but faintest outline upon paper—would lead boys to catch with rapidity sentences of great length, so long as the construction were not involved. They would almost insensibly be brought

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to think in Latin ; that is to say, it would very soon sound as ridiculous in their ears, to put *ille* after *amo* as to put ' he ' after ' I love ' ; and this intuitive perception of the grammar of a language, as connected with its musical sound, is one of the first requisites for a subsequent thorough knowledge of, and capacity of easy handling the same. And the process for acquiring this intuitive perception is not so difficult as it is usually thought to be. It is, in fact, not a very high mental process. It is acquired by postillions abroad and foreign waiters here, without great difficulty or delay. But although it is not a highly intellectual acquisition, it is a wonderfully useful one, to serve as a foundation for a really intellectual structure. And I am convinced that some such process should be employed with a novice in Latin, and in any language he may be approaching ; and that it is a positive cruelty to pin him wholly down for a year to monotonous lessons of memory, or to worry him too soon with formal rules for parsing.

VII. FROM POSSUM TO PHÆDRUS

THE course of study, sketched out in rough outline in the preceding chapter, would require, perhaps, a session, or at least three-quarters of a session, for the filling in of such shading as would be requisite to make of our sketch a finished and sightly drawing. Whilst memory had been continually engaged on the road from "Penna to Possum," we should imperceptibly have introduced all those rules of syntax wherein Latin and English—and, indeed, all the Arian languages—are at one.

We might now attack, still upon the *vivâ voce* method, those few rules, wherein the idiom of Latin is, or seems to be, at variance with that of our own tongue. We might, for a time, ingraft one such rule upon the work of each day; then ingraft them by twos; then by threes; then illustrate them at random. And in all our illustrations we should use familiar expressions, and contrast the Latin and English methods of expressing some one idea or circumstance. Thus, for such a sentence as, 'He struck the tree with an axe,' we might show how the use of the Latin *cum* in such a sentence would convey the notion of companionship; or that

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he struck the tree 'along with' an axe. And in such a sentence as, 'He wrote the letters with many tears,' we might show that to omit the *cum* in Latin would convey the idea of 'instrumentality,' or that he wrote the letters with tears as a sort of invisible ink. Such idioms we might illustrate, so familiarly and repeatedly, that their force could scarcely fail to be appreciated by the majority of, and perhaps by all, our pupils. And all this while, I must remind the reader, that our class is supposed to be engaged daily, for at least one hour, in the strict and rigorous analysis of some English paragraph; and that, during every such lesson in English grammar, attention is drawn to those cases where the habits of the two languages are at one, and where their idioms are really or apparently at variance.

By this time we should be prepared to take in hand some Latin book for reading. And here I should probably be compelled, not without reluctance, to commence with some Latin *Delectus* or *Reader*; but, afterwards, I should strongly object to any edition of a simple classic that should be encumbered with notes or vocabularies. I could recommend, for instance, a simple wxt-edition of the *Fables of Phædrus*: and

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such an edition would combine cheapness with utility : and I should take daily a fable at random, which should be made out in my presence. If, in such a fable, I saw a word not previously met with, or a difficult construction, or—what is not unfrequent—a piece of questionable Latinity, I should give due explanation or warning. And I should certainly never allow a fable to extend over even two days, for fear of my pupils losing interest in their work. And now I should commence systematically parsing my Latin lessons, and would draw special attention to diversities of idiom ; but I would never call upon a boy to repeat pedantic and too often meaningless rules ; but only to answer directly such questions as were put to him. Thus, in such a sentence as, *Suo se gladio miles vulneravit*, if I asked the gender of *suo* I should expect him only to say ‘ masculine ’ ; and if I asked him to say why it were so, I should expect him to reply, that it was so in imitation of, or in agreement with, the gender of *gladio*, its noun : and if I asked him the case of *suo*, should be content with the simple reply, that it was *ablative* ; and if I further asked him ‘ why,’ I should expect him to explain it on the same principle of imitation or agreement : but, if I asked him why

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gladio were *ablative*, I should expect him to say that it was so as expressing the 'means by which' the soldier did the deed. And, perhaps, before very long I should tell him that the *ablative* case meant the 'taking away' case, and I should ask him to find fault with the expression 'ablative case of the instrument'; and he would doubtless perceive that 'the taking away case' could hardly be 'the case of means by which,' and I then should request him to say simply, when asked the case of *gladio* in such a sentence, that it was the 'case of instrument,' or 'of means by which.' And I should similarly point out the absurdity of such expressions, if I ever met with them, as 'ablative of the cause, ablative of time, genitive of place'; and suggest that it would be no less ridiculous for us to speak of 'the waking condition of sleep,' or 'the active condition of repose.'

And if I came to such a sentence as *Puer librum tabulæ imposuit*, I should explain how *imposuit* meant 'put on'; and I should say that if a boy 'put,' he must first have 'put something'; and that this something might be called the 'primary object' after the transitive verb; and that if he put something 'on,' he must also have put that something 'on something else,' which

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something else I should expect to find in the case of the 'secondary object'; unless a special preposition were used, as in English: and so in the above Latin sentence he would see that *librum* was the primary object depending on the *posuit* in the verb; and *tabulæ* the secondary object depending immediately on the *in* of the same. And I should continually impress upon him that the primary object was rendered by what was called the accusative; and the secondary object by what was called the dative. And I should consider such a simple and rational and intelligible way of parsing far better than the explaining the case of *tabulæ* by so ridiculous a rule, as

"Verbs compounded with these ten prepositions, AD, ANTE, CUM, IN, INTER, OB, POST, PRÆ, SUB, and SUPER, govern a dative case."

And by and by, when my pupils were capable of following me, I should show them that in the termination of the accusative, in that insignificant letter 'm' at the end of the word, was probably latent some preposition meaning 'on,' 'upon,' or 'to,' which made the case to follow verbs or words of 'motion' or 'activity'; and that all datives properly ended in 'i,' and that this 'i' was probably the corruption of

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some preposition indicating 'motion' or 'rest,' 'in' or 'at a place'; and that all datives were really 'locatives' or cases of 'direction.'

And such explanations, instead of puzzling little heads, would amuse them and reassure them, by gradually bringing them to perceive that in Latin there was little of the mysterious, and that the people who once spoke that language were not all schoolmasters, but an ordinary mixture of people; tinkers and tailors, and wise men and foolish; like the inhabitants of our own island.

Meanwhile, if upholders of the system of rule-repetition argued against my plan as unmethodic and vague, I should reply that it were better for a boy to give once, in simple words that he understood, his explanation of a grammatical phenomenon, than to account for it a thousand times by a set formula that he understood partially or not at all. And I should assert that when a child has once got a thorough mental grasp of a grammatical phenomenon, he cannot let it go, though he try hard to do so; any more than an educated man, unless reduced to an unnatural imbecility, can forget that three times three makes nine, or that the three angles of a triangle are together equivalent to two right angles.

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And I would add that it was with repetition, as with all things good and useful, quite possible to have too much of it. A child, if kept continually at a few airs upon the piano, will ultimately lose all sense of their melody ; and a boy may repeat a grammar rule until it cease to carry an echo of meaning to his mind—and here I am boldly premising that it originally did carry a rather faint one. As in mental, so in physical operations, there are limits to the rule of repetition. We never heard of a boy forgetting to swim, or not learning to swim better, after he could once swim twenty strokes ; or forgetting to skate, after having once skimmed over twenty yards on Duddingston Loch ; and that, too, although months and even years might have elapsed between two separate occasions of swimming or skating.

VIII. FROM PHÆDRUS TO FAREWELL

IN my walk this afternoon I overtook some farm-servants, who were engaged in talk ; and caught the following words, from a lassie, as I passed by : ' Well : I thocht there were a gate.' And the sentence at once suggested itself as a simple example of the philological superiority of vulgar to literary speech. The Abstract Bagman would imagine there lay a blunder in the ' were.' The real blunder is in his own ' was.' The ' were ' is not plural, but an unconscious, traditional conservation of the old subjunctive, with its modification of vowel-sound. I should have, perhaps, only puzzled the farm-lassie, had I stopped to tell her that she was more than justified in putting her secondary verb into a mood of dubitative-ness, seeing that the primary verb from its very signification precluded the idea of certitude in the dependent statement. Very probably, before my commendation had been closed, her sweetheart would have punched my head, under the idea that some indelicacy were lurking beneath my polysyllables.

But, *revenons à nos moutons*, whom we left browsing on Phædrus. As too early an acquaintance with metrical Latin is apt

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to confuse a child's healthy, natural ideas of the position of words, I should be at great pains to provide a corrective by spoken sentences, and the use of a good exercise-book, if I could procure one. Arnold's First Latin Composition-book is an admirable manual, but the price is so outrageously exorbitant, that I should hesitate in suggesting its purchase. However, if the book be dear, it is certainly good ; and that palliation cannot be given for the majority of dear school-books. I could instance a very remarkable case of Selections from Herodotus. Taking the Tauchnitz standard of price as regards the mere ancient text, I should say there was about two pennyworth of Greek in the bookling I have in view : the notes might possibly be worth a penny, and a paper cover might be got for the fraction of a farthing. The book in question, to the disgrace of the publisher or purchaser, costs four shillings and sixpence. I would rather publish the classics than teach them.

It is a very singular fact, that while we confessedly use Latin as the chief instrument for inculcating clear and precise views on the philosophy of language, our pupils are early made familiar with constructions—especially in verse—where the simple law

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of natural speech is violated in obedience to questionable rules of rhetoric, or the imperious demands of non-Italian metre. Take, for instance, the first line we meet in opening our Virgil :

Tityre, tu, *patulæ* recubans sub tegmine *fagi*.

I would venture to affirm that the correct way of translating this line is : ‘ O Tityrus, that reclinest beneath the shelter of the beech ’ when ‘ spreading ’ ; indicating somewhat superfluously that the person addressed never so reclined when the tree were bare, and the weather, probably, damp or cold. Of course it is obvious that *patulæ* is intended as a mere epithet of *fagi*. But according to all the rules of natural speech, ancient or modern, the epithet should cling as closely to its noun, as the bark to the tree, the glove to the hand, the drapery to the human form. And, whenever such a dislocation as the one above quoted takes place, a novice should have explained to him the reasons for the divorce of wedded words ; and should be informed that, what natural speech had joined together, foreign metre had put asunder. Take another line : a very beautiful one to an ear trained to the abnormal licences of Latin verse :

Invalidasque tibi tendens, heu ! non tua, palmas.

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Here our epithet and noun, that should be as close together as the white legs of a toy-soldier, are straddling like a Colossus, for a fleet of petty words to sail under.

The second line of the elegiac stanza sins continually against the rules of natural arrangement; but, the peculiar difficulty of the metre pleads as a *circonstance atténuante*.

But it is not in verse alone that a pupil will stumble over artificial collocations. They abound in prose, wherever a writer is affecting the grand style, or is talking fine; whenever Livy begins scene-painting; or Cicero to roll in flood; or Tacitus to 'glower into a puddle'; or Juvenal to pour the vials of his carefully-bottled wrath upon excesses, with which he betrays a suspicious familiarity. A pupil, by being brought into too early an acquaintance with the tricks of rhetoric, fails later on to appreciate their force. With a sober-tinted background of natural Latin, these artificial figures would be brought out in full relief: as it is, they blend with the surrounding landscape, and the whole picture, to the art-student, has a dim and hazy look. If a pupil throughout the whole course of his elementary training were only or chiefly conversant with easy-flowing constructions; when he came, subsequently, upon the arti-

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ficial arrangements of a rhetorical passage, their peculiarity would at once arrest his attention ; and the writer's end would thus be attained ; for it was just to arrest a reader's attention that he arranged his words abnormally.

Furthermore, in sentences of spoken Latin, where the words should run in as natural an order as they do in un-rhetorical Italian, or, if you please, in common English, I should not hesitate to clip my adjectives of their terminations, wherever I could do so musically. Thus, I should not hesitate to say : *Bon' aurum'st : non id, m'ercule, bon' hominis't* ; but in such a sentence as *Bona femin' erat mater tua*, I cannot clip the adjective before a consonant, as the Italian ear is abhorrent of consonantal endings.

For a long while, then, I should, in all my spoken sentences, make my adjectives and nouns walk in loose pairs, side by side ; like the beasts into a Noah's ark, or school-girls in their joyless processions. In course of time, I should allow the adjective to throw its arms around its noun ; or make the couple touch finger-tips, as in a country dance, while their companion-words ran underneath.

When I had sufficiently guarded my pupils against an unreasoning belief in

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unreasonable word-arrangements, I should venture to put into their hands the exquisite Metamorphoses of Ovid. One or two of the stories I should set aside, as victims for sacrifice ; or as scape-goats to be driven into the wilderness of parsing. From these our daily lessons for a time would be chosen ; and these lessons would be duly construed, parsed, scanned, and committed to memory. But I should from time to time construe to them in uninterrupted English some of the most interesting stories ; making comments as I went on, but requiring no preparation, and no parsing.

Common sense would lead me to omit several stories. Many, however, that Prudery would pass by, I should exhibit in all the exquisiteness of their naked grace. I should follow Actæon through the wood, until he came upon the fountain where Diana was bathing, with her pretty hand-maids round her. And I should ask my boys, if *they* had ever surprised the goddess and her nymphs in their watery revels ; and they would tell me that, in their holidays, on clear summer nights, in some lake among their own glorious mountains, they had seen the crescent-moon and the twinkling stars. And I would tell them, that the story had a moral meaning besides its poetic one ;

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that, for all the poet said to the contrary, Actæon *was* led to the fountain by curiosity, and was punished for this fault, and not for a mere mistake. And they would agree with me that the moral was told in his story more gracefully, although not more funnily, than in their old favourite tale of Fatima and Bluebeard.

And I would follow with them the Holy Mother through the world, in her search of the lost Proserpine. And I would tell them, how in ancient Egypt Osiris died and came to life again, and was lost and was found ; and that, though we had no Osiris in our northern climes, we had still our maiden Proserpine, that stood every spring-time in the fields with the poppies in her hair ; and that she was stolen away every year still, and left for a while her mother desolate and forlorn.

And when they came to perceive what truths of astronomy, morals, and religion were quaintly and gracefully riddled in sweet Latin rhythm, they would see that the fancy of Ovid was not limited to indecent images, as it is supposed to have been by the Tourist in Norway, and other shallow writers of the Bagman tribe. And if a member of this low caste ever came into my class-room, I would call upon one of

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the younger children to show him the beauty and the truth of some story, wherein his impure imagination and defective scholarship had seen only a never-intended indecency.

But while in these readings I should exact no preparation and no parsing, I should exact a close and universal attention ; and if the latter were not given by any one pupil, I should consider the class and myself as blameworthy, in failing, by intellectual or moral means, to chain the attention of the wandering pupil ; and I should punish the class and myself with the loss of a quarter's play, for our selfish inattention to individual interests. And, by and by, when I read a hundred lines together from a Latin poet ; slowly and distinctly, and following closely the order of Latin words with a due regard to honest English idioms ; there would probably not be a boy in my class but would follow the English rendering of every Latin word. Acting upon this method, I have read through the whole *Æneid* with a not very advanced class in one year. For every twenty lines they had construed, parsed, and scanned, and said by heart, I read them a hundred lines in current English ; so that they read two books in the year, and I read ten. I believe they were the first child-

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mariners in Great Britain that ever circumnavigated that splendid poem.

Meanwhile, my pupils would have reached the period when it is usual for boys to begin versifying. To see this process in all its ridiculous nakedness, we should have to visit one of the great English schools. I have known young pupils to be removed from Dunedin to Harrow, or Rugby, or Marlborough, or other schools of fame. Their parents have sometimes told me that James or Willy was reported as doing very well ; only that he was very deficient in his Latin verses. I remember a lady telling me this, with a face of great concern, as the report sent in of her own boy. This boy of hers had a capital prose head, but would turn a summersault as easily as a pentameter.

Whilst I should impress upon all my pupils, gradually but orally, the strict rules of quantity and scansion, I should make verse exercises optional ; and I should not be surprised or annoyed if I found some of my best boys unwilling to undertake them, or, in their execution, coming below their ordinary standard of intelligence.

And now, Reader, I would willingly draw you on with me through an initiatory course of Greek ; and show you how interesting

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and amusing may be made the study of its regular declensions and conjugations ; how the bare branches of its rudiments may be clothed with green leaves ; how with the besom of common sense we should sweep aorists and polysyllables underneath the school-room grate. Or, leaving grammar on the ground-floor, I would fain carry you along with me up our Greek staircase to Plato and Æschylus and Aristophanes in the drawing-room, or to exercises in prose and iambics in the garret. But, Reader, how can I hope to retain you so long, when I fail to retain my own pupils ? If I begin my march at *Penna* with half a hundred little privates, before the march is ended my company has been eight times decimated, and a sorry decade is left for the closing of the campaign. Some have fallen by the way, and been buried in lawyers' offices, or counting-houses, or beneath bank-counters. Some have deserted, and gone to serve commanders, who give them a finer uniform and less toilsome work.

I met the other day a former pupil, whose school-fellows are still under me : he stopped to shake me by the hand, and I was delighted to see him, for, though his talents were below mediocrity, he was a well-conditioned, manly little fellow. If he were

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still in his old school-class, he would probably be a successful candidate for the last place but one. I asked him what he was now engaged in, and he told me, somewhat nervously, that he was attending the class of Logic and Metaphysics. And this reply of his set me thinking, Reader, of that wondrous chain of gold that binds to one another all things in nature, animate and inanimate ; how the green grass grows upon the idle hills to feed the silly sheep ; how the silly sheep browse thereupon to fatten you and me ; and how the great round world, with its green hills, and its silly sheep, and all its boys and schoolmasters, is bound by the chain of gold fast to the throne of Zeus. So, looking into that frank and pleasant face, I thought : ‘ Well, my boy, thou art not living altogether in vain. When thou quittest this thy bleating-ground, thou wilt leave some tags of wool behind thee. And the fleece of thy modest fees will cover with an overcoat the learned form of a most excellent professor.’

IX. TEETH ON EDGE, AND CLOSED LIPS

THE Cardinal of Westminster has the reputation of being the best Latinist of all that now wear violet stockings. What an interesting experiment it would be to kidnap his Eminence with the Ambassador from Athens into the Cambridge senate-house, when the annual prize exercises were being read in Latin and Greek verse. I take it for granted that the Cardinal, from the sacredness of his calling, has somewhat of the Heraclitus in his composition ; and that the Ambassador, from the vivacity of his nation, will sympathize more with the laughter of Abdera. I can imagine that his Excellency would listen wonderingly during the recital of The Greek Ode ; and, on hearing that it was in his own language, would burst, in spite of his good-breeding, into an uncontrollable guffaw. Before the Latin hexameters had gone through twelve lines, the Cardinal would be removed to the Lodge of Trinity, and treated soothingly for a temporary derangement of the digestive organs.

Were you ever present, Reader, at the public distribution of prizes at a great English school ? If so, you will have heard the senior pupils recite what are called

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Alcaics and Elegiacs, with a thin, scran-nel-pipe pronunciation, and a mechanical observance of the skeleton-rules of scanning. This is not their fault. Some of these lads have musical ears ; most of them can hum " God save the Queen " ; and all are quite aware that they are uttering sounds as harmonious as if one whistled on the edge of a comb. Not their fault at all. They are taught by us to read a most exquisitely musical language in this barbarous way. You may hear the Italian flute played in such a manner as to resemble a split fife, by the public orators at our great universities.

At a time when Greek was becoming the language of the civilized world, and entering as the first linguistic element into the education of youth, a grammarian of Alexandria suggested the idea of accentuating all Greek words, as a help in the study of a very intricate tongue, and as a means for conserving its traditional rhythm. A few such accents you may see in books of modern times ; French, Italian, and Spanish. To a native, or a foreigner thoroughly conversant with Greek, such multitudinous accents as a page of Greek now exhibits are blots upon the original text ; and you may imagine how they would have appeared to an Athenian

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of the time of Pericles, by observing the effect upon yourself of the following style of printing :

Thè cúrrent thát with géntle múrmur glídes,
Thoû knôw'st, béing stópp'd, 'impátiently dòth ràge.

These marks might be of some assistance to a young Hindoo student of English, but they would, in all probability, have prevented Shakspeare from recognizing his own handiwork. They give the appearance of poetry severely scarred with the small-pox.

However, the ingenious invention of the old grammarian has met with a fate that no oracle, by any possibility, could have prognosticated. His accents, even where they are questionably correct, are carefully preserved in writing, and the rules upon which they proceed are sedulously studied, although their study is a somewhat perplexing one ; but strange to say, they are never observed in the way he must have had in view,—we never sound a single word according to their suggestions, except by chance. We have a leader in our Greek concert, who flourishes his bâton vigorously, and in what is thought correctest time, but the members of the orchestra are independent of his rule, and regardless of one another.

Towards the close of my school-days, I

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used to envy very much my best of school-friends the privilege he enjoyed of supping from time to time with the greatest of then living writers. I remember his describing to me how this veteran scholar read an ode of Horace after the pronunciation he had recently heard in Tuscany ; and I confess that until I had heard the simple but sweet music of the Italian vowels, I had had no idea that the Roman lyre could be struck to such reverberant sound. Indeed, I had always imagined that the cadence of Latin poetry resembled the intermittent notes of the piano, and I found, to my surprise and pleasure, that it admitted of the prolonged vibrations and rolls of the violin and organ. Perhaps, in no piece of Latin poetry is the fulness of Italian sound, and the thinness of our own, more readily appreciable than in that Latinest of Latin poems, the *Atys* of Catullus. If any English scholar can succeed in making this poem sound musically in the ears of man, woman, or child, with our orthodox accentuation, he will have rivalled that ingenious German youth who produced the sounds of half an orchestra from a combination of Jew's-harps.

But, if our English pronunciation of Latin be unmusical for verse, it is absolutely ludicrous for prose, and the more so as the

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prose approaches the familiar and conversational style. We have but to read a scene of Plautus out loud, or to see one travestied at Westminster, to convince ourselves of this fact. For the purposes of carrying on an extempore conversation our method of pronouncing is as ill-adapted as our system of teaching. But, it will be argued, that there would be no utility in a scholar's possessing the power of fluently speaking either of the old languages ; that they are taught merely as abstract studies, for the purpose of conveying strict ideas of grammar and philology ; that the mere sound of vowels and the accentuation of words are but trifles compared with the intellectual end in view.

I freely acknowledge that the heads of our greatest English schools are boldly self-consistent. They unflinchingly extend their system to modern languages ; and I could name more than one flourishing and aristocratic school, where French is taught by an English clergyman with an accent that would set a Parisian coiffeur in convulsions ; where every ' u ' is sounded like the ' u ' in ' flute,' and every final ' n ' is clenched with an honest, Teuton guttural.

In his sixth year of tuition, a very excellent pupil left me for one of the most famous

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of southern schools. He was at the time well advanced in French and German. He went south, I was told, to acquire an English accent. He went south, I know, to lose that of French and German. The latter language he was advised to discontinue, as it interfered with the more important study of Latin versification. The study of French, however, is continued for him by an Englishman, with a sort of club-footed pronunciation. 'Oh, never mind his German,' said the Vice-Principal,—who, strange to say, is an excellent modern linguist,—to my pupil's father; 'he can pick it up in six weeks (!) after he has left us.' I think it must have taken about the same time for the clergyman of that establishment to pick up *his* French, with its club-footed and hoof-like accentuation.

Now, Reader, reflect for one moment upon the paradox that is presented to us. We have two languages, Greek and Latin—neither of which has ceased to be spoken in continental Europe; two languages, which have become our chief instruments of higher education, irrespectively altogether of the chief end of any language; to wit, the expression of thought by speech. There is a good deal of tomfoolery in the teaching of many of our boarding-schools; but I

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have never yet heard of any enterprising and philosophical German illustrating to young ladies a course of musical lectures by means of a violin that went 'thud-thud,' and a piano that went 'jingle-jangle.'

I once dined with a friend, whose rooms were in the house of a *patissière*, who gave lessons in pastry-making to a class of young ladies. I formed a good idea of her didactic system from the indigestibility of a pie-crust, which was served up in my honour ; for, detecting the hand of a novice in the pastry, I inferred that the teacher's method was strictly practical ; and indeed, at the time I selfishly regretted that it was so.

Again, good Reader, reflect for another moment upon another paradox. Let us suppose that by advertising, or some other omnipotent means, we could obtain a nursery-maid, a housemaid, and a cook, who could all speak Latin ; and that your little daughter, from the age of seven to nine, should hear them daily conversing in her nursery. Why, in two years she would talk Latin as fluently as you talk English. Now, do you suppose that the power of speaking it with ease would be a barrier to her understanding the theory of its grammar ? Or will you venture to affirm that this imper-

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ceptibly-acquired power would not be a very powerful assistance to her and you, if you should ever carry her in that language to the analytic study of its syntax? Well, Reader, you have, I will suppose, a son, who has been acquiring an English accent, and a partial control over the elegiac metre in some public school; say for the last six years. When he next dines at home, take him unawares at dessert-time, and offer him a guinea if he can express the following sentence in correct Latin: 'I have been learning Latin for six years; and, upon my word, I don't think I could, in that language, say "Bo" to a goose.' Your guinea will be quite safe. But if your little daughter has had a French governess for six months, a similar experiment in French would be attended with some risk.

A member of my own family, who received his early education in Florence, and graduated very recently at our Edinburgh University, was making a tour of Holland during the last summer. He had introductions to some of the chief medical professors in Utrecht. He went through the various wards in the hospital with the Professor of Clinical Surgery and his posse of students. For an hour and a half, the Professor, out of compliment to the stranger,

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made every remark to his students in Latin. And instead of giggling, or nudging each other, the students took notes, and seemed to follow with ease all that was said. And, what is more curious still, the stranger followed all the remarks made, as easily as if they had been given in English, French, Italian, or German, although his Latin studies had been discontinued at a much earlier period than when a scholar usually leaves an English school for the University. But then, in boyhood and early youth he had studied Latin with a view of reading it with ease and speaking it with fluency, and not with a view of writing stilted prose, trashy hexameters, and trashier alcaics. In fact Latin had taken its part with other studies in rendering him an accomplished man, and had not been used in excess for the purpose of stuffing him into a useless University Prize Pig.

Now, Reader, not to speak of our schools of medicine, do you think you could find any Englishman, even after twenty years spent in teaching Latin, who could do with an effort what was done without an effort by this unscholastic Dutchman? Or, if you could hit upon such a native Phoenix, do you think he could gather a class, not of medical students, but of first-class Tripo-

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men, who could follow him for half an hour ?

And now, Reader, I fear I have tried your temper too far. Confess it. You are a little angry with me. 'Do you mean to say, a true Briton is not as good as a Dutchman?' Nay, Reader, nay: I am as national as yourself. In all departments of science, and in a few branches of polite learning, our countrymen can hold their own against all Continentalists. But there is no doubt that, in the familiar handling of the classic tongues—of Latin especially—we are far behind Germany, Holland, and Italy. And the simple reason is that they, to a certain extent, follow nature in their method of teaching at least one of these languages; and make it, to some extent, a living language by their method of communicating it. With our present system of teaching, and our impossible pronunciation, any attempt at a practical use of the same language would present the ghastly phenomenon of galvanism upon a corpse.

Is there any chance then of amendment in our great public schools? In those of England, I think there is none; in those of Scotland, there is a possibility of change.

The fact is, the Reformation, that im-

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proved religion in England, spoiled its Latinity ; and the pedantic dread of false quantities has strangled Italian accent. In Scotland, a servile imitation of what is bad in English scholarship has nearly led to the extinction of a music, which, at the commencement of the present century, might have been heard in every parish school.

And, now, your *Clerico-didaskalos* of England is a plump and comfortable black-bird, who, from over-feeding, has forgotten his ancient song. His lay-brother of the North, however, is a thrush, who is kept on very wholesomely-spare diet. Cover his cage with a towel : let him wait a while for his seed ; and my goodness, how that hungry bird will sing !

X. PLACE AUX DAMES

OUR sex is incorrigible. Eighteen centuries of Christianity have rained upon it with no permanently softening result. We speak of the feudal times as the dark ages ; a title coined by the after-envy of a more logical, but more vulgar civilization. For some three hundred years there *was* a dim light in Christendom ; and warriors, superfluously helmeted, with sword and battle-axe dinning into each other's heads a proper respect for the ladies. But in an unhappy hour the Medicis of Florence made fashionable the study of Greek ; and since Europe has taken to learning and logic, it has lost one-half of its old fun, and nearly all its old chivalry.

Strange to say, the most barbarous tribes we have ever unearthed, seem as deficient in politeness as the most civilised and refined of western nations. But your barbarian is, at all events, no hypocrite. In the old Mexican hut, the unheeded squaws would in silence chew the narcotic weed, whose subsequent chewing was to make their lord as like a pig as alcohol can make a Christian. An African monarch fattens his mistress out of all shape ; not, as travellers say, to humour a low sense of female beauty,

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but in obedience to the impulse of a deeply-rooted male jealousy. The Turk immures his wives in a dull Hareem, and feeds them on sickening sweetmeats, in revenge for the loss of a paradise, that he would be too stupid to enjoy. The Chinaman squeezes the feet of his women into lumps of helplessness ; but the more ingenious European transfers the pressure to the female brain.

You will wonder, Reader, what spirit of impertinence leads me to meddle with the arcana of our Boarding-schools. I am quite aware that I have no more right to pry into the mysteries of a lady's education than into those of her toilet. But I cannot help hearing what I hear ; seeing what I see. In every street I pass wonderingly beneath overshadowing domes of crinoline ; and dainty silken stays peep out of the windows of that shop in George Street, which is, I believe, termed a *Magasin* from the inflammatory and inflammable nature of its contents. In another shop-window in that same street, I often see what are called OBJECT CARDS, which were invented by some spiteful, and, of course, male wretch, for the purpose of frittering away the time and intellects of all subsequent generations of girlhood. To one of these cards I saw attached a small piece of coal, and under-

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neath it was printed a farrago of chemical and other gibberish, which goes by the satirical name of 'useful information.' To another was attached a piece of sponge, too small to clean a slate, but apparently large enough to absorb a whole page of wishy-washy observations. To another was pinned a butterfly's wing. I am convinced that, inside the shop, I might have seen cards, illustrative of natural history, ornamented with impaled cockroaches and nasty martyred earwigs. What do instructors of young girls do with these cards? Do they read out loud the nonsense written underneath, as texts for informational sermons? And, in doing so, can they retain their gravity? If they have such command of facial muscle, O why do they waste in a school-room those talents for low comedy which would win them renown and fortune at the Adelphi?

I heard, only a few days since, that our girls were fed upon Latin roots. I asked through what process of cookery these roots might have passed. I was informed that they were invariably given raw. Such indigestible food I knew to be fit only for pigs. And my blood boiled within me, to think that such should be the dewless nurture of the sweet acorn-cups of future

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womanhood ; the pretty embryo-possibilities of maternity ; that such copper-handling should be made of the silver-pieces of small change, whose universality makes the golden guinea of a Madonna.

Then, again, I have heard of globes, whose use is taught in secret. I wonder how they use them. Do they roll them up and down their school-rooms ? or toss them up, to catch them in gigantic cups ? or, more gracefully than acrobats in the Circus, patter them with pretty feet up and down inclined planes ?

But, my little Lady-reader, if you have mysteries in your Boarding-school, so has your brother at Rugby, and your cousin who is preparing for examination at the Horse Guards. The former is improving into Alcaics the aphorisms of Tupper : the latter is gathering universal history from the pictured page of a Chepmell. O little Reader, did you ever study the work of this great historian ? I wish I had a portrait of him. I should hang it over my mantel-piece in an inverted position ; which position I should alter to the natural one, so soon as I should fall in with one individual who could make head or tail of his cui-earthly-bono writings.

Music is supposed to be a *sine quâ*
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non in the education of all girls. The Boarding-schools of Dunedin are allowed a very high position in the field of feminine didactics ; for Dunedin is the intellectual capital of an education-loving kingdom. In one of our very fashionable and aristocratic schools you will see a music-master, in the course of three hours, pass fifteen little strumming maidens through his hands. He gives this lesson, of superintendence it is called, once a week. In another still more fashionable school this electric-telegraph superintendence is given once a fortnight. In twelve minutes the master has to hear an old lesson played, to settle the piece for the next lesson, to write a good or bad mark in a note-book, and occasionally to take a pinch of snuff, or blow his weary nose. The little pupil, in the latter school, has about eleven minutes of male-supervision in the course of a fortnight ; which would give fifty-five seconds per diem, if the work were distributed over all the week days. Have these music-masters never heard of Richardson's Theatre, where a tragedy, a comedy, and a comic song are all enacted within the limits of their per-
spiring lessons ?

May not this electric-telegraph system of musical instruction explain the general

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shallowness of our drawing-room music ? The fault can hardly be in the brains or fingers of our girls, for they come of a race that has produced the most exquisite ballad-system and the best collection of love-songs in all Europe. Some thousands of our girls are studying music year by year ; yet for every girl-musician in Dunedin you would find thirty in less populous Brussels, and ten in insignificant Bruges. And what are Belgian girls to the girls of Scotland ?

Modern languages are taught at all schools to all pupils. How often, Reader, have you met with a girl of fifteen who could write French correctly, or speak it with a good accent ; although she might have studied the language for four years at a flourishing school ? This is not the fault of our girls : the cause lies deeper. Our Boarding-schools are too often mere business speculations, whose proprietors have as much real interest in the mental culture of their charges as a hotel-keeper in the spiritual welfare of his guests : men of talent are often employed by them in work degrading to themselves and useless to their pupils ; and very often sharp and ready fellows are employed, that never received the education of gentlemen, and were never intended to address a lady

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without the intervention of a counter. If a system is vulgar that employs incompetency, that sweats and underpays talent ; is there no vulgarity in those patrons whose call for cheap teaching is the source of all the mischief ? What do we want with your fine musicians and over-educated scholars. Give us teaching-stuff that will stand wear and tear ; catgut nerves and gutta-percha brains !

Your German master is often a man of learning, and is always well educated : your French master of the old school was a man of elegant accomplishments and a *preux chevalier* ; but the manners of France appear to have degenerated under the ellwand of a Shop-king, and the spurred boot of a Barrack-emperor.

Italian—beautiful, musical, classic Italian—is alas ! not very generally appreciated, although its teachers are usually men of a high caste. Not long ago, a royal Prince at Holyrood read, for a while, Italian with an accomplished soldier and gentleman ; and this circumstance raised in the estimation of our citizens the language of Dante, Ariosto, Tasso, and Alfieri. What a good thing it would be if we were honoured with a mere *εἰδωλον* of royalty in the old palace, whose shadowy Highness might be repre-

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sented as patronizing, from time to time, such accomplishments as we seemed in danger of forgetting ! And it would not be a change to be deplored, if we could hear more music from the Italian nightingale, and a trifle less of chatter from the magpie of France.

But after all, modern languages should be taught practically and conversationally. The only grammar taught to girls below the age of twelve should be that of their own language ; and its terms should be made as plain and intelligible as possible. Perhaps no subject is better taught than this latter one in our schools. But to girls of superior intelligence, even English is not the language upon which to found general and comprehensive ideas of grammar, such as may facilitate the after-acquisition of any modern language. You would never inculcate ideas of filial duty on a child, by continually obtruding upon him impertinent mention of his own parents. You would tell him amusing and instructive stories of other children and other parents. Even so with grammar.

In the education of boys, it has been agreed, perhaps truly, that Latin is the best instrument for inculcating the general laws of language. Are there genders in educa-

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tional systems, like as in Latin or French nouns? Is there anything in Latin grammar peculiarly 'male'? How did they talk at dinner-time in ancient Rome? Did the men speak only masculine nouns; the ladies, feminine ones; and the servants, 'common' ones? We have no warrant for such a conclusion. I believe the Latin language to have been, and still to be, incapable of such partitioning. It is not of the masculine gender; nor of the feminine; nor of the neuter or neither; but, like other languages, of 'the either gender.' And, if properly taught, it would be found a far easier language than German; considerably easier than French; and a little easier in its old form than in its slightly altered form of modern Italian, which is very easy indeed.

Heaven forbid that our girls should be taught Latin with the grammars now in use, and those annotated books, that may help an incompetent master over an occasional stile, but can only enervate a pupil's brain, and transfer coin from the pocket of an exasperated parent to the pocket of an undeserving publisher.

I assert that a good Latin grammar might be limited to twenty-four pages, and sold, with a large profit, for sixpence; and that this bookling, with an extra outlay of half

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a crown, might, with a competent master, carry scholars over two years of work. And I also assert that girls might, with great advantage, pass through two or even three years of Latin teaching, if that language were taught on an easy, simple, and natural method.

Although a schoolmaster of boys, Reader, I have still a touch of gallantry. Smile at my proposal. I would undertake to teach Latin to a class of girls twelve years of age, without the use of pedantic and expensive books, or of pedantic and meaningless grammar rules. My pronunciation would be Italian, as nearly Tuscan as I could make it. I would never forget that I was training children, not to be school-mistresses, but gentle ladies in a drawing-room, and gentler mothers in a nursery. I would so teach a young class, that if a master of a great English school were to interrupt us in our work, he would say : ‘ Ah ! they are engaged in a lesson of trumpery Italian.’ And I would, perhaps, mildly quiz him to my pupils in correct Latinity, which, from being rapidly and musically spoken, he would not understand. And in two years, perhaps ; and in three years, most certainly ; I would have girls on my class, who would speak an old language, not

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unlike the language of modern Tuscany, in a way that would shame their brothers and cousins, who had been five years at any grammar-school in the kingdom, and trained on the old system of Elementary Unintelligibility. And I would teach them Latin in such a way, that very soon they would read a parable in either Italian or Spanish without stumbling over either word or construction. And I would engage to say that my pupils would like their work, and would not dislike their master.

And consider the collateral effects of so bracing and healthful an education of our girls. Boy-classics would be forced, in emulation, to dispense with much of their dull pedantry : and youths would be ashamed to continue ignorant of modern tongues that their sisters spoke with elegance and ease. We have now a smattering of youths that cram reluctantly some knowledge of French, German, Italian or Spanish, to win marks in our Chinese examinations. What a vulgar and profane usage of the dialects of Corneille, Goethe, Dante, and Cervantes !

But, Reader, you are alarmed. You are afraid that such a system would make Blue-stockings of our girls. Prejudice, Reader : unmanly, unchivalrous prejudice. The ladies

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of the Russian noblesse can speak almost every language of Europe; but they are exquisitely feminine. My brother sat for a week opposite a fair creature at a *table d'hôte* in Venice; and perhaps he never ate less, or enjoyed dinner more, for a week together. He heard her speak all the languages he knew; and some that he did not know. But for her linguistic powers, he would have taken her for an English girl, from her English accent and her blonde beauty. Of course, she was a Russian. She had no appearance of the Blue. If she was one; then I could wish that all were even as that sweet, young, blue-eyed Polyglot. 'Twas a lucky fellow, I should think, that caught that little Tartar.

Do, Reader, disabuse your reasonable mind of unreasonable crotchets. Women have just as keen intelligence as men; less powers, maybe, of abstract reasoning; but far finer perceptive and linguistic faculties. They need not be trained to exhaustive scholarship; but refinement of mental culture suits them, perhaps, even more than it does our own sex.

I imagine that the Lady Jane, who read her Phædo when the horn was calling, had as pretty a mouse-face as you ever saw in

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a dream ; and I am sure that gentle girl was a better scholar than any lad of seventeen is now in any school of England or Scotland.

And once upon a time, Reader—a long, long while ago—I knew a schoolmaster ; and that schoolmaster had a wife. And she was young, and fair, and learned ; like that princess-pupil of old Ascham ; fair and learned as Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother. And her voice was ever soft, gentle, and low, Reader : an excellent thing in woman. And her fingers were quick at needlework, and nimble in all a housewife's cunning. And she could draw sweet music from the ivory board ; and sweeter, stranger music from the dull life of her schoolmaster-husband. And she was slow of heart to understand mischief, but her feet ran swift to do good. And she was simple with the simplicity of girlhood, and wise with the wisdom that cometh only of the Lord,—cometh only to the children of the Kingdom. And her sweet, young life was as a Morning Hymn, sung by child-voices to rich organ music. Time shall throw his dart at Death, ere Death has slain such another.

For she died, Reader : a long, long while ago. And I stood once by her grave ; her

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green grave, not far from dear Dunedin.
Died, Reader : for all she was so fair and
young, and learned, and simple, and good.
And I am told it made a great difference to
that schoolmaster.

NOTE TO CHAPTER X

WITH all that I originally wrote on the education of girls and women I am more than pleased, and that too notwithstanding the fact that the republication of such material is now become superfluous. The baby-house schools of past generations are now dignified high schools and collegiate quadrangles. Would that in this matter I could even think that to some extent *post hoc* were *propter hoc*! I put forward no such claim. I was simply lucky in the matter of temporal opportunity. I was unwittingly swimming in the full tide of popular sentiment. Of all the social improvements that have adorned this wonderful Victorian epoch, I think that the amelioration of woman's position in the vital matters of education and training, intellectual and physical, may rightly claim the place of honour. I purposely add 'physical' to 'intellectual,' for are we not living under the dispensation of the health-giving and space-destroying bicycle?

Indeed, I think we may now, without presumption, claim to see a clear meaning in those lines of the ancient oracle that so

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long have baffled the curiosity of the
learned :

Ἡ πρὶν ἐοῦσ' ἄσοφος σοφία ποθ' ὑπείροχος ἔσται,
ὠκυπόδων δ' ἵππων ἵππων περ ἄτερθε ταχίων.¹

D'ARCY W. THOMPSON

Galway, March 1898.

¹ "She that was formerly foolish shall some day
excel in wisdom, and shall be swifter than swift-
footed horses, though horse she has none !"

XI. SOLAR SPECKS

DURING the last Summer Vacations, I devoted ten weeks to the sedulous and uninterrupted study of Homer. I had repeatedly read both Iliad and Odyssey, but usually in detached books, with an intermixture of other work, or in places where I knew at least one living soul. I now gave literally my whole thoughts and attention to the rhythm and story of these splendid poems, fondly imagining I might solve to my own satisfaction some of the many riddles they held involved.

It was not so much from the then unsatisfactory condition of my health, as from a general conviction, founded upon observation and tables of statistics, of the ridiculous brevity of human life, that I refrained from the use of German commentaries. I was also impressed with the idea that Homer could only be explained by Homer; that the answer to the riddle was to be found latent in the question. And I felt thankful that I had never read any tediously-learned book, in my own or any other language, that could warp my views or muddle my conceptions.

I need hardly say, that I did not read these poems according to the ordinary principles of scansion. Such a continuous

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narcotic would have been dangerous to my physical health, and would have kept me dormant through two of the finest months we have had for years. I contrived, to my own satisfaction, to combine the rules of metre with those of accent ; and in my pronunciation of the words, where the vowel-sounds of modern Greek seemed thin, I adopted without hesitation the richer vowel-music of Italy.

I may as well premise that, as I read for my own selfish amusement, I did not hold myself bound to any code of laws, metrical or accentual. Thus when the old grammarians accentuated *ἄνθρωπον* on the first syllable, and *ἄνθρωπους* or *ἄνθρωπους* on the second, I disagreed with them, and accentuated both words alike on the first syllable, in defiance of all authority, ancient or modern. And I argued thus : If the mere addition of a plural ' s ' were to modify the accent of a word, then such a word as *militēs* or *militems* might be expected to be otherwise accentuated than *militem* ; which would seem absurd : and whilst we say ' mánnikin,' ' whírligig,' ' cóckle-shell,' we might expect to find ' manníkins,' ' whirlígigs,' ' cocklé-shells ' ; which would be very absurd indeed.

Of course, I should not be so peremptory

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in dealing with such words as *ἄνθρωπον*, *ἄνθρωπον*, for in the last syllable of these words are latent two distinct vowel sounds ; and the words may have once been of the forms, *ἄνθρωποιο*, *ἄνθρωποι* ; or something of the kind. Even in these words, however, I am inclined to be a little sceptical. At all events, I should never speak of a deficiency of ‘ apples ’ in an ‘ applé-pie ’ ; or of cleaning my ‘ chímney ’ with a little ‘ chimnéy-sweep.’

From these and similar considerations, while I followed the received rules for accentuation to a very great extent, I ventured to contravene them on those not rare occasions, when they seemed to me intrinsically ridiculous. And in these cases, it appeared to me that the old grammarians, having laid down laws of accentuation that were generally true, adhered rigidly to them on all occasions ; forgetting the wise saying, that must have been old even in their day, that ‘ there is no rule without an exception.’

Meanwhile, I was heaping up a pyramid of laborious notes. I had classified the words that occur once or twice or thrice in the two poems ; innumerable instances of irregularity in tense and mood ; natural confusions of number and construction ; the

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recurrences of special cadence in metre, with a view of discovering the 'tune' or 'tunes' of the old Singers; the names of mountains and rivers, with a view of tracing Celtic synonyms; the similes, with the vain hope of bounding the scope of the poet's imaginative experience; the description of wounds, with the view of defining his knowledge of anatomy; peculiarities in the collocation of words, with the view of tracing the extent of his artificiality; irregularities of case-ending, which, commencing with the noun, would naturally extend to its imitators, the adjective and participle; and innumerable instances of verbal forms, which grammars and lexicons call passive, but whose reflective meaning may be thoroughly and idiomatically rendered by the Saxon auxiliary 'get.' These notes cost me two months of hard work to write, and three subsequent months of moderate work to arrange in order.

But O the vanity of human toil! My fondest and my most humble hope is, that my boy may one day be a scholar, and a devout and enthusiastic student of the poet, whose poetry to me is only equalled by the music of Mozart and Beethoven. And, behold, I was preparing a dull, ponderous book, which he might hereafter

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consider it a pious duty to peruse ; and which might possibly throw a dulness not their own into the works they were tediously illustrating. Furthermore, I called to mind how the reading of such annotations had transformed many a healthy scholar into a dreary pedant ; and how the writing of the same had turned many a pedant into a Bishop. And I trembled for the safety of my own lay-estate ; and saw the risk I was running of being ordained without a word of warning, and of being hurried away, unprepared, into the House of Lords, to preside, as a father in God, over a gigantic church-establishment, and, as a temporal peer, over the destinies of a great nation. I determined, therefore, to conceal my perilous intimacy with heathen particles and metres, καὶ λαθάνειν Ἑλληνισθεῖς. Accordingly, I surrendered my note-bundles to my good landlady ; who, unwittingly, for a week past, has, in kindling her kitchen fire, been extinguishing my first and last chance of a book-stall immortality.

With regard to the main subject of the Iliad, I was convinced that it was the glory of Troy, and that Hector was the real hero of an Ionian poet's fancy. The commencement of the first book seemed to me worded with an exquisite artfulness, with the view

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of throwing the reader off his guard. As Ilium *did* fall, it was requisite for the poet to make it fall without honour to the victors. One of the latter is therefore selected as the type of beauty, strength, and passion ; the undeserving favourite of unreasoning Fortune and partial gods. He is kept out of view for a very long while, to give his colleagues the opportunity of showing themselves inferior to the real hero. The absence is due to a prolonged sulkiness, occasioned by the loss of a feminine companion, to whom he does not appear to have been chivalrously attached. He might have caught the measles from Thersites, had the tale been told in prose. It would have served him right ; and have answered effectually the purpose of the story. He is eventually roused to action by the death of his friend, who, at the close of a summer's day, after the slaughter of some scores of Trojans, falls, as is not unusual with warriors, on the field of battle. The mock-hero is as brutal in avenging his companion, as though Hector had murdered him at a banquet, and Hecuba had served him up at supper as a dainty dish before old Priam.

The magnificent description of the Hephæstian arms all tends to glorify the

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hero against whom they were forged, and to detract from the credit of the wearer. The deceit of Athênê in the final combat puts the extinguisher upon the glory of Achilles, and makes a splendid martyr of his antagonist. And the whole poem closes simply and majestically, like a funeral march of Beethoven : ' So bare they knightly Hector to his grave ; ' the kindest husband that ever loved and honoured wife ; the most courteous gentleman that ever spake softly to fair and frail lady ; the tenderest father that ever dandled boy-baby ; and the sternest knight that ever struck with sword round Ilium.

While in the Iliad the master-hand had wrought a variety of war-songs into one long, homogeneous recitative, I saw that in the Odyssey he had had to deal with subject-matter more homely and less congruous. Some quaint old Bunyans had in earliest times quaffed the cup of Circe on the island of *Ææa*. And mariners, Ionian and Phœnician, by winter fires had spun yarns for the great Weaver to incorporate in his imperishable web. And he, who in his old age drew from music a solace for light denied, had in earlier manhood been a bright-eyed sailor ; had in Tyre seen the works of cunning sons of Moloch ; had

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heard upon the Nile of the hundred-gated Thebes, and the gloomy River, and the land of Shadows. But not in Italy had he seen the cannibal Læstrygons ; nor in Sicily, great Polyphême. This latter worthy was never suggested by Tauric Sun-god, with metal disc upon his head. No : the poet had heard all about him in his childhood from his dear old grandmother. And, Reader, we have all seen him in our nurseries, where he is still at his old work of crunching men's bones. For Polyphême is but a Cyclops ; and a Cyclops is but a Κίκλωψ ; and a Kyklo-ops is nothing but our old friend, Goggle-eyes.

The reason why the Odyssey had, in course of time, triumphed over other poems that sang the return of other heroes, was firstly due to the fact that a type of character was wanted to illustrate other qualities than pride, obstinacy, and physical courage ; a type around which might naturally cluster all that was beautiful, serious, pleasant, or ridiculous in common life ; a type of the roving, adventurous, cunning island-rover, to contrast vividly with the somewhat monotonous mailed heroes of the " Lay of Great Hector," or the " Lays of the Achæan Kings." Again, Ithaca was at a more convenient distance from Troy than Salamis,

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or Argos, or Pylos, or Lacedæmon. Had the poet selected the Telamonian Ajax in preference to Ulysses, a premature gale, or his own pigheadedness, might have hurried the hero into port at the opening of the second book.

After diligent and mature consideration of the metre, I came to the conclusion that it belonged to the *genus vertebratum*; that the spine was Saturnian, and the vertebræ trochees; that in the old Italian hymn of the Salian priests we have the almost amorphous form that, on the seaboard of Ionia, had developed into the Homeric epic. The first rude hymns and ballads would probably run to the following simple metre:

- U	- U	- U	- U	- U	- U	- U
- UU	- UU	--	- UU	- UU		
^	^		^	^		
U U	U - U		U - U	U - U		

and it is a singular coincidence that the old Salii should have perambulated the streets of Rome, with the sacred shields, dancing to their hymn of

Æno' Las | os ju | vato. || Triumpe ! | Triumpe ! | Triumpe !

to a metre, and perhaps a music, not dissimilar to that of the Methodist's sweet

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simple lines, the simplicity of which verges on the ridiculous :

O but | that will be | joyful||joyful | joy-y-ful | joyful,
O but | that will be | joyful||when we | meet to | part
no more.

Indeed, it occurred to me that all poetry must resolve itself eventually into a system of trochees or iambi ; which feet are easily interchangeable by a change of syllabic emphasis. However, I felt convinced that, in the Arian languages, the trochee emphasis would prevail, while a dialect preserved its rich, vowel inflexions ; that the iambic emphasis would creep in, as a dialect began to use contracted endings ; and would, finally, be predominant, when the dialect should take to the use of prefixes and the disuse of vowel endings. Consequently, I was not surprised to find the iambus in the Attic drama and Teutonic modern epic ; and the trochee dominant in Dante, whose dialect has lost, indeed, its case-affixes, but conserved its sweet vowel terminations.

Now, in the skeleton metre above given, a continuous sequence of trochees over a long poem would be next to impossible ; and, if possible, would be very unmusical. The dactyl would seem to me the natural

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efflorescence of the trochee ; as the anapæst of the iambus. All metres of a ballad kind might be expected to show something answering to a refrain, or something analogous to our rhyme. I shall consequently expect to find in the above a dactyl towards the close of the line ; not at the very end, as the effect would be jerky, and unsuggestive of repose ; and not too far from the end, or else the echo would be lost. And this consideration explains to me the almost invariable presence of the dactyl in the fifth foot.

As for the spondees that occur, I hold that the majority of them were accented or read as trochees. They certainly would conduce to give variety to the metre, and at times to introduce a purposed stateliness and majesty. Very often they would intrude as the children of necessity.

From the extreme perfection of the metre in the two poems, and the extreme inaccuracy in the use of conditional and dubitative moods, it is obvious that the poems were brought to a completion in an age of high civilization.

Furthermore, we may gauge the civilisation of a poet by the use of the adverb, as we test that of a lady by the handling of a fork. For, as a musician once remarked to

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me, the adverb is the index of mental refinement. It is a Nilometer of rising taste. Your Helot has but a limited store of adverbs, but they are cayenne-ish, superlative. In a very simple and early ballad the adverb would scarcely appear at all. In Homer, it varies through *chiaro* to *chiar'-oscuo*, and again to *chiaro*: no *oscuo* or *oscurissimo*; for only an indifferent painter would heighten a contrast by the vulgar use of black. If the poetry of Homer is simple and primitive, then, maybe, painting at one stride achieved the Madonnas of Raffaele and the sunsets of Claude.

To me the Iliad appears a congeries of warlike lays, grouped by the artifice of a most simple plot into a homogeneous story. The lays were in a rude Saturnian metre, and adapted for singing. The story is told in a stately but ever-varying measure, that flows in a majestic recitative. The Odyssey seems to have stolen from all possible sources; allegory, travellers' tales, and nursery-lore. The story is not homogeneous, but kaleidoscopic; as the story should have been that was destined to give birth to Jack the Giant-Killer and Sinbad the Sailor; to lend grace to the Æneid, and majesty to "Paradise Lost."

In both the poems, with more especial

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care in the Iliad, the primitive trochee system is modulated into the richer music of intermixed spondees and dactyls. For a long while the trochee would be found scattered through the metre, where of yore he was predominant ; but at length he would fade away like a Red Indian before his stalwart supplanters. I am convinced, however, that a great many of the superfluous monosyllabic appendages, as $\tau\epsilon$ and $\gamma\epsilon$, are due to scribes, who carried on a war of extermination against the remnant of the old Trochees. I wish the Trochees had risen with a war-whoop and scalped them by the dozen.

Again ; I am led to consider the Homeric poems as the production of a high civilisation, from the fact that they admit of an abnormal position of words, as evinced, chiefly, in the unnatural separation of epithet and noun. As this licence, however, is but sparingly used, I infer that the metre of the poem was the gradual growth of an autochthonous system of versification. Thus, in a highly finished poem like the sixth book of the Iliad, I only find in five hundred and twenty lines about thirty instances where the position of words is questionable ; and no instance where the position is very distorted.

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But when I come to the examination of the chief Roman poems, I find thirty instances of false position in the first eighty-eight lines of Lucretius ; in the first fifty-one lines of the first book of the *Æneid* ; in the first sixty-four lines of the second book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* ; and in the first seventy-four lines of the second epistle of the second book of Horace ; in none of which cases is the adjective in the predicate. That is to say, while in Homer I find a liberty taken with natural construction once in every eighteen lines I find one taken in every alternate line by the poets of and about the Augustan age. And furthermore, in these latter poets I find certain constructions, which for harshness have no analogue in their simpler and grander metrical prototype ; as, for instance, in such lines as—

Quàm quæ Dardanium tellus mihi servat Acesten
Et patris Anchisæ gremio complectitur ossa.

Interea, *medium* Æneas jam classe tenebat
Certus iter.

Cæruleæ cui terga notæ maculosus et auro
Squamam incendebat fulgor.

Cujus ebur, nitidum fastigia summa tegebat .
Argenti bifores radiabant lumine valvæ.

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Proteäque ambiguum, *balænarumque* prementem
Ægæona suis immania terga lacertis.

Inde loco medius *rerum novitate paventem*
Sol *oculis juvenem, quibus aspicit omnia, vidit.*

Jussa *Deæ celeres peragunt, ignemque vomentes*
Ambrosiæ succo saturos, præsepibus altis
Quadrupedes ducunt.

Occupat ille *levem juvenili corpore currum.*

Utque labant *curvæ justo sine pondere naves.*

Tum primùm *radiis gelidi caluere Triones.*

Ita fertur, ut acri
Præcipiti pinus *Boreâ. cui victa remisit*
Frena suus rector.

Ille *relicto—*

Nam Ligurum populos et magnas rexerat urbes—
Imperio.

Luculli miles *collecta viatica multis*
Ærumnis, lassus dum noctu stertit, ad assem
Perdiderat.

Dura sed emovere loco me tempora grato.
Civilisque rudem belli tulit æstus ad arma.

Obturem *patulas impune legentibus aures.*

Obscurata diù populo bonus eruet, atque
Proferet in lucem speciosa vocabula rerum.

In each of the passages here quoted there

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is a construction that spoken Latin would have undoubtedly eschewed ; and in some of the passages, a strict and regular translation, independent of the context, would make downright nonsense ; and indeed, in such Ovidian lines as

Non mihi, quæ duri colerent *pater arva juvenci,*
Lanigerosve greges, non ulla armenta reliquit,

we have an instance of a word being ungrammatically choked by an accumulation on all sides of relative mud. And remember, these more than questionable passages are culled from only about six pages, taken at random, of the most finished Augustan verse.

The fact is, the sudden influx of Grecian refinement had as brilliant and disastrous an effect upon Roman genius, as had the influx of Transatlantic gold upon the morals and political power of Spain. In the last generation of the Republic, and in the first of the Empire, men were in a hurry to acquire intellectual wealth, and paid the penalty for their imprudent haste.

Again ; in Homer, the cadence of such a line as the following—

Τυδέος ἔκγονός ἐσσι, δαΐφρονος Οἰνεΐδαο,

recurs once in every nine lines on an
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average. Such a line occasionally occurs in Lucretius ; but may be said to be non-existent in the Augustan poets. That is to say, Lucretius imitated the musical cadence of Homer, and the after poets followed the stricter rules of conventional scansion, which in all probability were wholly unknown to Homer. The rhythm of Lucretius is monotonous, but it is trochaic, dactylic, Italian. Catullus is more trochaic, more Italian. Virgil, Horace, and Ovid are more varied, more refined, and decidedly un-Italian.

That is to say, these three poets performed a feat completely unparalleled in the history of all plastic art. They had a somewhat unformed language to work upon, and used for their models the most finished works of the most perfect of all languages. Nay, they even insisted on burdening themselves with accuracies of rhythm to which their prototypes were strangers. And they so exquisitely moulded their rude language to the wished-for shape, that the licences, taken with it in the process, have escaped the ken of all succeeding scholars and critics. Their very blunders have become the touchstones of elegance.

Lucretius, from the nature of his subject, addresses himself only to an esoteric set

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of readers ; as do Virgil, Horace, and Ovid from the exquisite though unnational polish of their style. A Roman noble of good natural abilities, who had spent a few years at the University of Athens, would have enjoyed equally the grandeur of Lucretius, the sweet dignity of Virgil, the lyrical chastity and bantering wisdom of Horace, the wit and fancy and flexile adaptiveness of Ovid. But Catullus alone, with the trochaic and dactylic ring of his Italian hendecasyllables, and the unapproached native force of his Atys, could have sent a thrill to the heart of a shop-boy in Rome, or a shepherd on the Calabrian hills.

The Augustan poets anticipated the due season of metrical perfection ; *præripuere musicen postero sæculo debitam* ; but they warped their language in the process. Greek mental wealth, a Mæcenas and an Emperor ripened prematurely the delicious fruit ; and killed the seed. For Virgil, Ovid, and Horace had no successors. There are passages in Juvenal that would lead us to suppose he might have been a poet had he never studied rhetoric. A green glade opens at long intervals in the dreary wood of Lucan. The dull lamps of Silius and Statius flare up momentarily from time to time. Claudian was a revolving light that sent a few intermittent gleams through

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thick darkness, and went out after doing little service. But a Priest is to sit on the throne of the Cæsars, and waves of war are to surge over Italy. The old gods will linger in remote places, and in the hearts of common men : they are lingering there still. The ancient speech will live in the mouths of peasant-folk, safe from the pedanticisms of an aristocratic literature, and bending, undestroyed, before the hurricanes of war. After dark and stormy centuries, a Dante will sing to a Christian lyre a song, grand and eternal as the Apennines ; in words of native, pure, indigenous Italian ; in a dialect older than the great grandmother of the elder Cato.

Now, supposing we commenced our system of instruction in Latin upon a *vivâ-voce*, conversational method, and approached Latin literature through natural passages of prose, such as we might extract from Plautus—ay, and from Erasmus—a pupil would detect instinctively the offences committed against universal grammar by the polished poets of the Augustan age. As it is, we ignore altogether the conversational method in our teaching, and profess to teach Latin only for the inculcation of the rules of abstract grammar ; and the majority of the examples to our rules of syntax are

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elaborate passages from the most artificial class of all poets.

In other words, we inculcate the rules of abstract grammar by the aid of examples where the rules of natural grammar are ignored in favour of a style conventional and artificial; and, to convey to young children intelligible ideas of general grammar, we pass by with contempt the teaching of their mother-tongue, and the lessons of an easy-flowing, unconventional Latinity, and puzzle their little brains by introducing them at once to constructions, whose essential faultiness and conventional grace are visible only to a trained and finished scholar. Indeed, am I presumptuous in asserting, that hitherto all our best Latinists have gone repeatedly over Augustan ground, never dreaming that it was riddled with grammatical pit-falls? Nay; am I presumptuous in stating also that even Italian Latinists have passed unnoticed the flaws that, to a certain extent, denationalise the master-poems of their own ancient literature? If I am presumptuous, Reader, I am so in a good cause. I am not exalting my own puny ideas of language against the taste and wit and genius of the Augustan trio. The Hellenised Latinity of these giants is splendid enough—heaven knows!

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—in spite of, and perhaps by reason of, its foreign cadence and its daring disregard of simplicity. But, leaving to Horace the undisputed throne of Wit and Wisdom, I recognise in Ariosto the equal of Ovid, and in Dante one greater than the great Mantuan. And the fancy of Ariosto and the sublimity of Dante are of Italian growth, autochthonal. So, Reader, if I am presumptuous, I humbly hope this presumption will prove to be a malady incurable and contagious.

Upon what meat hath our schoolmaster fed,
That he is grown so big? Can Isis send
No sallow, hungry-visaged Cassius north,
To prick the veins of his o'er-swoln conceit?
Come, envious Casca; thin-lipp'd Cassius, come;
Draw near him, as he unsuspecting stands
Before his pygmy, sycophant senators;
And, hissing through your teeth, "Take this, and
that!"
Stab him, as ye stabb'd Cæsar, with steel-pens!

XII. FALLACIES¹

THERE is nothing new under the sun,' said Solomon ; and his apophthegm was as old as the truth it embodied. 'Our learning is but recollection,' said Plato ; and what a deal he must have known, ere his memory was dimmed by his humanity ! 'What hath been, is, and will be,' said, or thought, Pythagoras ; and the sentiment was as true and trite as that of King Solomon.

Wise men of old have given us the potted essence of sagacity, in small canisters, such as we may carry about with us, without trouble, to the Equator or either Pole. Alas ! too often, in starting on our life-journey, we hamper ourselves with burdensome provisions, that are found in a green mould ere the journey is half over.

Keeping in view the maxims above quoted, and that of Plato in particular, let us review the several words that at various times have been adopted to define or specify the occupation of a schoolmaster.

He may be called a 'Teacher.' But the root of the verb 'teach' is the middle syllable of the word in'di'cate ; and he

¹ In the original edition this chapter was numbered XVI, and so on to the end of the volume. See Prefatory Note.

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who teaches, merely points out this or that with his *digits*, *doigts*, or 'toes'; and it is obvious that the objects, to which he points, must be extraneous to himself.

Or he may be said to be employed in the business of 'instruction' or 'edification.' But these are simple building terms; and no bricklayer can make a wall out of his own head, however thick that head may be.

Or, again, in old-fashioned speech, for which we have Old Testament authority, he may be said 'to learn' his pupils this or that language or science. And herein I observe how directly vulgar speech goes to the bull's eye of truth. For the verb 'learn' may be used in a sort of reflective sense; and a man, who teaches Latin to his pupils, may be said 'to get them to learn' or 'recollect Latin.'

I have known a teacher of French laugh most unphilosophically at a pupil—behind his back—for pronouncing *chien* like 'cayenne.' But the boy was in the right. The substance of *chien* he had been familiar with from childhood in the shape of its English homonym, 'hound': it was only with its accidents that he was unacquainted. How on earth could he, as a reasonable being, guess that a nation, in pronouncing such a word, would insist upon mis-pro-

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nouncing the strong guttural 'ch,' upon dropping the final 'n,' and sounding the word as though there were a 'g' a mile off? Depend upon it, any logical little fellow will pronounce the word 'correctly,' until he learns from his instructor how unreasonable and incorrect are the rules of speech.

Again; a teacher of Latin is apt to deal harshly with a novice who, in a catholic spirit, makes *bonus* agree with a single soldier in the nominative, or a dozen old women in the ablative. The fact is, the boy would be wrong if he did anything else at starting. He is unconsciously making an 'improvement' in language, which we practical people in England made long ago; which the French, Italians, and Spaniards have partially advanced; and towards which the Germans are progressing with the same rapidity that characterises their diplomacy.

The logical and praiseworthy pupil is inculcating the absurdity of saying one thing twice over. 'Why,' he argues, 'in the following sentence, "I am a sensible lad," I am quite aware that "lad" is "nominative" and "singular" and "masculine," and also that "a" and "sensible" are inseparably connected with it, from the mere meaning of the

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passage. Why then should I bother myself about their spelling, for the purpose of proving to myself by ocular means what I know by the inspiration of mother-wit ? ’

Hereupon, the Master will say to the logical but troublesome student : ‘ Sir, the people of ancient Italy, like many other ancient people, had very musical ears ; and consequently, when words agreed together in sense, they wished them to agree in sound. Not that the latter agreement was absolutely requisite. It was probably a harmony that owed its origin to an aural civilisation of music and speech, and its decay to an ocular civilisation of logic and paper. Perhaps, it was found troublesome, like the pretty prolixities of a rococo politeness, and the stately tediousness of the old minuet. But although this agreement of mere sound was not peremptorily requisite, it is valuable as a suggestion of perfect concord. Thus, in married life, it is not enough that husband and wife should agree in essentials. I have, indeed, read of a married pair finding it prudent and economical for one to lean to fat and the other to engross the lean. The one-ness of the motive might justify the diversity of habit. But the experiment was fraught with peril. I am of opinion that there is but little prospect of harmony being

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maintained, either in married life or in Latin,—or at all events, in the relations of master and pupil,—unless concord be preserved in the minutest particulars.'

And the pupil will now reply : ' Well, sir : there is much in what you say ; consequently, after this, whatever vagaries a noun may take into its head, I'll take good care that the adjective shall follow the lead. If *homo* chooses to whistle into a dative plural, *felix* also shall whistle like a mavis. But surely, sir, you are not going to hurt my hand, because the old Italians had such provokingly fine ears for music ? '

And hereupon the Master will smile, and drop something back again into his pocket, and will think to himself : ' Why, this young fellow knows as much as I do about the substantialities of noun and adjective ; it is merely the accidents of their dress, or sound, or appearance, with which he is unacquainted.'

Again ; when a boy, apparently dull, has his first lesson in geometry, he reads that ' a point has no parts and no magnitude.' Why, this is a definition that would apply to ' a thought ' ; ' a smell ; ' ' the tail of a guinea-pig ; ' to ' pigeon's milk ' ; ' a mare's egg ; ' or to ' nothing-at-all.' I am convinced that many a boy, apparently dull, would grasp the idea of a mathematical

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point, who could never catch the force of the above definition. He could easily understand that a solid body occupies space ; that space is bounded by surfaces ; that surfaces are bounded by lines ; that lines are bounded by points. And thus, from an intuitive idea of bulk, he is led to a mathematical conception of surfaces, lines, and points, without the aid of a single definition. To commence the study of geometry with a novice by the definition of a point, is like commencing a series of anatomical lectures with an account of our once cellular condition, or the biography of a polemical theologian with a definition of his Christian charity.

Again : to define a straight line as that which lies evenly between its extreme points, is to give a definition that still requires defining ; for the word ' evenly ' seems to beg the whole question at issue. I believe a better definition of a straight line would be that ' it was a line not crooked ' ; or, perhaps, a better one still, that ' a straight line is a straight line.' And if I wished a child to grasp the idea of a point, I should ask him to think of the sharp end of a needle, with his eyes shut ; or of the respect paid to learning in Dunedin, with his eyes open ; and to aid him in grasping the idea of a straight line, I should ask him again

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to shut his eyes, and picture to himself an arrow so thin that he could shoot it through a window-pane without breaking it ; or I should ask him to imagine the course which an ecclesiastic would take, if a bull were behind him or a bishopric in front.

In arguing once with a mathematician of eminence, I asserted that I would make clear and intelligible to any non-mathematical man of common sense any symbolical expression however complex ; provided only that I clearly understood it myself. He desired me to make the experiment with the expression

$$a^{\circ}=b^{\circ}=c^{\circ}=\&c.=x^{\circ}=1.$$

I did so in his presence, and was allowed to have carried my point. And the inference I wish to be drawn from this is simply : that mathematical symbols very often, like moral aphorisms, are but brief and convenient ways of putting universally-known truths.

A pupil often dislikes a master unreasonably in his youth, and eulogizes him as unreasonably in manhood. ' Ah ! ' says he, as he sips his wine ; ' what little knowledge I have was all got from old So-and-so.' Of course, he does not mean any one else to believe what he does not believe himself ; and what, indeed, is not true.

When the praises of some great scholar

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or mathematician are being rehearsed, you may hear a master say with a pardonable pride : ‘ Ay ; So-and-so was my pupil for many a year.’ And he believes in the inference of his words, and wishes you to believe in it too. He is perfectly honest ; but his inference is not true for all that. It may be partially true : it may be wholly false.

Your bricklayer plods with trowel at the foundation of the column ; and the crow builds its nest at the top, adorning the capital with natural bird-lime ; and the bricklayer and the crow deserve equal credit for the pillar’s aërial grace.

A very poor teacher and a poorer scholar was speaking in my presence of a Cambridge star. ‘ He read with me,’ said he, ‘ for six years together.’ And I thought to myself : ‘ Had he read with you for twelve, he would still have been an excellent scholar.’

I grant that a vigorous and energetic tutor may cram to almost any extent a youth, whose health is robust, and whose bent of intellect is very prosaic and very acquisitive. He may, with a tremendous effort, push him very near to a First Class at Oxford ; with a great effort, he may push him into the First Class at Cambridge ; with a prolonged, but not exhausting effort, he may push him one-third of the way up the list of Wranglers ;

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he may without difficulty, but not without patience and a long course of *pâté-de-Strasbourg* feeding, make of his pupil a Mandarin of the Blue Button in our Chinese Examinations for India and the Civil Service. So in the pages of Theodore Hook have I read, how a dog-fancier prepared an often-stolen dog for diverse markets ; how, by processes of rubbing, polishing, cutting, clipping and fattening, the chameleon-hound passed through various metempsychoses, as spaniel, greyhound, retriever, bull-terrier, and mastiff.

But with a youth of fine talents, and a love of knowledge for its own sweet sake, a master can only fire his ambition by his precepts and his example. He can no more digest his mental than his physical aliment.

Does a master ever meet with such a pupil ? very, very rarely. And, indeed, if a boy be gifted with good natural parts, and inclined to follow knowledge for herself alone, his motives for study are nearly sure to be corrupted by the foolish but pardonable ambition of his parents or his schoolmaster. 'How is it,' says a father, 'that my boy is so low down in his class ?' 'I think,' says the master to an old pupil, 'you need not read such and such a book, for it's sure not to "pay" in any examination.'

However, if your genius is rare, I verily

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believe that your dunce is a Phoenix still more rare. Indeed, I have never met with an undoubted specimen of the 'booby.' Perhaps, a physically-healthy booby is as great a rarity as a live Dodo. I have known many lads to be classified under the category ; but, on investigation, I have always found that their training was at fault ; that the gravelly part of their intelligence was being ploughed, and the loamy part left fallow.

It seems to me that, in his intellectual capacity, a teacher has to point out to his pupils a writing on the wall, to direct their gaze, and to throw a good light upon the inscription. It is possible that young eyes will decipher it more easily and correctly than he does himself.

But, though young eyes are sharp, young judgment is not very trustworthy. So a boy may draw a wrong inference from what, in one sense, he clearly apprehends. He can run at great speed ; more quickly than a grown man. Then keep him on the right road. When he comes to where many ways meet, let him find signposts, with inscriptions clear and short and legible ; and be very careful that the signboards point the right way.

I have known instances where these signboards were duly set up, but the boards were

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considerably larger than those we see on turnpikes, and the inscriptions so long and indistinct, that, long before they could be deciphered, it was time to go to bed.

You remember, Reader, how Diogenes, to be busy like the rest of his fellow-citizens, rolled his tub up and down the market-place. Now, had he rolled it up and down a back-alley, he would have done no harm ; and it was certainly not his intention to do any good. But in the market-place, you may depend upon it, he was terribly in the way. There are a great many respectable men among ourselves, who, with the best of motives, are unconsciously imitating the ill-natured Cynic, and who pass their whole lives in rolling big, empty tubs up and down our most crowded thoroughfares.—Were you ever present, Reader, at a debate in either House of Parliament?—In a century or two, I am convinced, the policeman will be making these tub-rollers move on.

In all her works, Nature, who is the hand-maid of God, is simple and direct. We have no well-authenticated instance of her tying knots for the mere amusement of unraveling them. Man, in the majority of his works, displays a love of intricacy and obstruction ; and more so in mental operations

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than in handiwork. A carpenter comes provided only with tools for chiselling and planing, and never turns aside to sweep a chimney or whitewash a ceiling. A surgeon proceeds at once to the amputation of a wounded limb, and never thinks of commencing operations by making the wound worse. But a schoolmaster, in teaching a language to a young pupil, burdens his lessons with explanations that are infinitely more perplexing than their subject. Many a child would have found Latin easy and interesting, had we not been at such pains to make it difficult and dull.

Many a child would find the Lord's day a day of calm and happiness ; would grow up in the belief that religion was a sweet and pleasant thing ; that virtue was not a hardship ; that vice was of itself detestable ; and that God was far wiser than even his own father, and kinder than even his own mother,—but for those ingeniously obstructive means that divines have invented for the purpose of checking the spontaneous spirituality of children. A child is supposed to be religiously brought up, if his Sunday hours are choked with liturgies and collects and catechisms. He repeats definitions of doctrines that are beyond the comprehension of humanity. He is taught to regard as

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sinful, actions as extraneous to morality as the neighing of a horse. His duty to God is made obscure by the midnight of superfluous words. His duty to his neighbour, that intuition or example would imperceptibly have taught, is made odious by being communicated in a long and difficult formula, which he has to repeat like a parrot. He prattles innocently of so wonderful a doctrine as that of eternal salvation for the good : and there is no harm in that : and of so terrible a one as that of the eternal condemnation of the wicked. But he is not told that the word ' eternal ' means ' everlasting,' and that ' everlasting ' means ' eternal ' ; and that the meaning of either word is as much beyond the comprehension of a Newton as it is beyond that of a theologian or a baboon.

While the jumbling of a child's mental and spiritual nature is the business of the schoolmaster and divine, the jumbling of the interests of manhood, social, commercial, and political, is the prerogative of the statesman. How many a petty kingdom would have risen long ago into wealth and importance, but for the obstructive ingenuity of its well-meaning but tub-rolling rulers.

In former days the Faculty of Medicine rolled a tub terrible as the car of Juggernaut. Charged with a deadly erudition, the profes-

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sional healer passed a knee-breeched life doing all manner of mischief among the people. To many a one a weeping Martha might have said : ' Sir, if thou hadst *not* been here, our brother had not died.' But of late years an ebb-tide of repentance has happily set in, and the Faculty now set an example to other professions of a reverence for Nature and simplicity.

The combined effects of the jumbling system, as pursued by teacher, divine, and statesman, make of society an easy prey to that cormorant profession which thrives on the garbage of man's follies and vices. In whatever country the lawyer class is wealthy and powerful, we may be sure that the schoolmaster and the divine are there either wholly idle or mischievously active. For the lawyer is, as you are well aware, Reader, the very incarnation of the — ; but no : my chapter is on Fallacies, and would close most inappropriately with a truism.

XIII. NURSERY REFORM

I AM very fond of dogs. They are religious beasties : but idolaters ; for they worship us. The old Egyptians worshipped them. The dogs have the better of it in the comparison. On week-days a dog may suggest morality and religious faith ; but he has a painfully profane look on Sunday. Poor heathen brute : he should run into hiding-places on Saturday at midnight, as a ghost vanishes at cock-crowing.

I am equally fond of cats. But they are utterly devoid of religion : sleek epicures, that live only in the present. They may coil cosily into roley-poley cushions ; wash daintily behind their ears ; and drone their drowsy little humdrum fireside-hymns ; but with the best of them there is a faint, lingering odour of Beelzebub.

I should not wonder if, on the other side of Styx, some faithful friend were to welcome me with the wagging of a shadowy tail, and the utterance of a thin and ineffectual bow-wow. But the boat of Charon will push a difficult furrow through innumerable bodies, brickbat-laden, of purrless, soul-less, dead-as-door-nail cats. Poor pussies !

But though I love these hairy favourites much, I love little children more. And I care not whether they be blonde or brown ; clean

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or dirty ; lordlings or chimney-sweepkins. Not a button. I would rather they were not too good ; or goody. Let us have a little naughtiness, sprinkled in at intervals : it gives a flavour to the insipidity of vegetable innocence.

A Pharisee is not a pleasant object, be he clad in swallow-tails or cotton frock. And there is a social Pharisee as well as a religious one. Clean face and glossy curls must never frown upon little, smutty, streetling Publican. No, no : it is quite possible that this little sparrow-boy but rarely washes his face ; more rarely says his prayers ; and never blows his nose : which practices are common with genteel canary-children. But not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father. Let us all have a share of natural commonness ; of wholesome naughtiness ; of clean dirt. Let us stand occasionally in the corner of repentance ; 'outside of all joy, like Neptune in the cold.' Then will we promise to be good ; we will throw tiny arms half round papa's neck ; will kiss him half-way through his yellow beard ; we'll be happy for ever, and ever, and ever, and live on toffee and almond-rock. O the bliss of making-up ! The rain after drought ! the sunshine after rain ! Yea : 'tis a sweet thing and a pleasant to have been a little naughty.

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Eliminate misdoing from the world, and you annihilate charity. The air is uninhabitable from a surplus of oxygen. The good deed shines no longer that glistened like a glow-worm in a naughty world. Imagine, Reader, the humiliating condition of a good parson who has overdone his duty : the vestrymen are better than he ; the clerk is better than the vestrymen ; the pew-opener is suspected of being better than them all. Why, the church is top-heavy : another effort, and it will stand upon its spire. Come back to the old ways, my friend. There must be degrees : there must be degrees.

But while I can regard with complacency a little naughtiness in children, I am grieved to the heart to see their eyes dimmed ever so little, and their cheeks ever so slightly pale. O me, for the faces that one sees at times, so wee, and wan, and old ! for the little tiny Elders who begin life at the wrong end !

I regret, also, that children are under the absurd necessity of growing bigger ; of developing from baby-buds into boy-tulips and men-cabbages. They keep pet-spaniels permanently small ; but by means that imperil their little lives. I wonder if an elixir could be suggested that would keep a child always a child. Nay : I know there is such an elixir ; and I know, also, from

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what fountain it may be drawn ; and has been drawn. It is bitter, if you sip of it ; but sweet, they say, if you take a full quaff. But he that drinks thereof cares not afterwards for earthly meat or drink ; but passes away, and leaves us ; with a look of strange joy upon his countenance. And we follow him a little way, sorrowing. And I think he must wonder at our sorrow ; and from under his green counterpane must hear, as from the depths of a sweet dream, our cry of *Vale ! vale ! in æternum vale !*

Did you ever sit, Reader, with your Babe upon your knee, and its dear, good Grandmother before you ? Stretch out both hands, and you will touch very nearly at the zero and the infinity of life ; the mystery of the forgotten Past, and the mystery of an unknown Future.

But to return to our dogs. I am glad that our homeless ones have found of late a genial and kindly advocate. But I could find it in my heart to deprive them of their patron ; for to me they seem to be appropriating the children's bread ; and I would employ his humour and his pathos to plead the more melancholy cause of our own poor, grammarless little ones. I would use all my eloquence to depict the miserable condition of these sweet victims of parental

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indifference : I would point to them, as they stood, blue and shivering, without a rag of syntax round their little loins ; and show them dwining away before our eyes beneath the pitiless influences of grammatical destitution.

And moved by the eloquence of my pleading, and impressed with a conviction of its truth, some aged hosier in his latter days, ignoring the paltry claims of kindred, would leave a colossal fortune for the realization of my philanthropic schemes. And I should found a magnificent institution in the neighbourhood of our Dunedin, and should call it the Caiêtêum, or the Normal Institution for the training of Nursery-maidens. And the building should be a palatial one, with green lawns and shrubberies and massive gateways ; and there should be lodges at the gates, wherein should dwell porters, whose business it were at distant intervals to open and to shut those gates. And I would appoint a board of twenty Guardians, who should on stated occasions dine sumptuously out of its funds, for the benefit of the Caiêtêum. And I would select a Governor of a grave and dignified demeanour, and a numerous staff of masters well skilled in the turning of the gerund-stone. And from the Board of

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Guardians should be selected a sub-committee of three members, who should be named the Special Aggravators, and their business it should be to worry the Governor of grave demeanour, and to set the Governor a-worrying the turners of the gerund-stone. And the palace and the Board and the staff, should be for the housing and the superintending and the instructing of ten little Nursery-maidens, who should be chosen exclusively from such families of the name of 'Thompson' as should spell it with a 'p.' And for a term of years these little maidens should apply their noses to the outer edge of the rapidly-turning gerund-stone. And when their brains were cleared of the weeds of nature, and mother-wit, and unassisted sense, I should send them forth as Missionaries into the outer world for the reformation of our nurseries.

And wherever these little Missionaries came, they would sweep away, as with a besom, all idle games and silly puzzles and unedifying tales. And Jack would flee in terror to the summit of his own beanstalk ; Cock-Robin would be borne unpitied to his grave ; and Mother Hubbard, led by her own dog, would beg her bread, an exile in far distant lands. And our children should be instructed upon those scientific and theo-

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retic principles, which in other and higher departments of education have stood the test of ages. And these Missionary-maidens should be furnished, each with her gerund-stone ; and resolute parents should apply the noses of their prattlers to the outer edge thereof, as it turned rapidly. But, forasmuch as the process might for a while prove disagreeable to the instructed, the Maidens should be further equipped with an implement of hardened leather, highly charged with a subtle electricity, whose dexterous application to the palm should have the property of endearing to the little ones these Maidens and their gerund-stones.

Follow me, gentle Reader, into a model Nursery, and behold our system in full operation. Those little children yonder, blue-eyed and flaxen-haired ; fresh from the Eden, where innocents still wander ; are standing for the first time before the mysterious engine of their mental training. From dawn to eve, this summer's day, they are committing to memory all words that end in 'ock,' as 'cock,' 'knock,' 'block,' 'rock,' 'stock,' 'smock,' 'flock' : beginning with a cock that must not crow : for the fowl is as yet unprovided with verb, and conjugation, and voice—most essential this for crowing—and mood and tense, and

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number and person : and ending with a flock that must neither frolic nor bleat. To-morrow they will give undivided attention to words that end in 'dom,' as 'kingdom,' 'beadledom' ; the day following, to words in 'ition,' as 'deglutition,' 'perdition' ; then to words in 'ation,' as 'trituration,' 'botheration' ; and so on for a month or two, till the category of ordinary words is exhausted. Then are they to be put to wholesome tribulation upon words that lack a singular, as, 'tongs,' 'scissors,' 'spectacles,' 'stockings,' 'trousers,' 'breeches' ; then on nouns that lack a plural, as, 'butter,' 'beef,' 'mutton,' 'glue,' 'alicompayne' ; then on nouns that lack a possessive case, as 'gruel,' 'wash-handstand,' 'microcosm' ; then on nouns that lack a vocative, as, 'ninepins,' 'oatmeal,' 'cosmogony,' 'philoprogenitiveness.' And if, meanwhile, they yawn over the work, or ask idle questions of curiosity, they will be subjected to the influence of the Electric Leather.

When sufficiently bewildered, it may be irritated, with months of substantives, they shall pass through similar ordeals of undiluted adjectives, participles, verbs, adverbs, numerals, prepositions, and conjunctions. Then shall they be put through a course of

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syntax, which shall daily be administered to them in infinitesimal doses, according to the received principles of grammatical Homœopathy.

Then shall be put into their tiny hands the interesting and exhaustive Biographies of the great Busbequius Bungfungus ; and by homœopathic treatment each Biography shall be made to occupy many weeks ; so that the children, in reading the death of Palæologus, and Mithrobarzanes, and other favourite heroes, may have forgotten all the circumstances of their lives. And if they read a fable, they shall read it in minute portions, so that, on arriving at the tail or moral, they may be unable to apply it to the body. And in their daily readings they shall continually sing their verbal and syntactic formulæ, which shall sound like mystic hymns in the ears of their delighted parents.

It is true that the children by this method, will be powerless to express their passing thoughts, or to describe occurrences that take place before their eyes ; but they will be imbued with theories of speech, too sacred to be employed in the profanities of idle talk ; and for this their parents will feel duly grateful to the Leather of Electricity and the rapidly-turning gerund-stone.

But ah ! Reader, all human devices are

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marred with imperfection. My own system, perfect as it may seem, is lop-sided, as it affects but the mental part of our nature. It is true, the lilies of the field toil not as they grow. The lambkin on the hill-side thrives pleasurable into sheephood : I wish I could add, passes painlessly into mutton. The beaver learns his pontifical trade, unstimulated by flaps of the parental tail. To the brain of man is decreed the proud prerogative of uncomfortable growth. No : not decreed : in this matter, I imagine, the sagacity of man has improved upon the wisdom of Omniscience.

The mental training of my own boyhood was a continuous sensation of obstruction and pain. By the aid of catechisms, Crossmans, and burdensome observances, I was grooved laboriously into a secure and permanent orthodoxy. My mental and spiritual parts were furrowed ; but, alas ! my physical part remained fallow. My growth in stature was left carelessly to my Maker, and proceeded without a hint of artificial tribulation. This flaw in our educational system it is my ambition to remove. I have invented a mechanical adjustment of powerful magnetic needles, whose permanent application to the frame will render child, boy, or youth continuously sensible of physical growth.

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The feeling will be as though five minutes of acute toothache were diffused over a space of months. A youth will literally develop into manhood through pins and needles. We shall then have realised the perfect organism of the Roman poet's fancy, the—

Mens TORTA in corpore TORTO.

XIV. DEAD LANGUAGES

A DEAD language : what a sad and solemn expression ! Trite enough, I own ; but to a reflective mind, none the less sad and solemn ; for in the death of which it speaks are involved deaths untold, innumerable.

I can understand what is meant by ‘ a Dead Sea ’ ; and should suppose it to be a sheet of water cut off from all intercourse with the main ocean ; never rising with its flow ; never sinking with its ebb ; never skimmed by the sail of commerce ; never flapped by wing of wandering bird ; undisturbed by the bustle of the restless world ; but slumbering in a desolate wilderness, far from the track of caravan, or railway, or steamship, in a stagnant, and tide-forgotten, and unheeded repose.

The chance-directed efforts of an enterprising traveller exhumed, but recently, the sculptured monuments of a dead civilization. We then learned that Nineveh and Babylon were not only the homes of conquering kings, but the seats of tranquil learning and treasured science, before ever a fleet had sailed from Aulis, or the eagles had promised empire to the watcher on the green Palatine.

The language of priestly and kingly

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Etruria is revealed to us only by dim marks upon vase or tablet, or by melancholy inscriptions on sepulchral stones. That is, indeed, a language unquestionably dead.

But can such a term be applied to that Hellenic speech that in the *Iliad* has rolled, like the great Father of Waters, its course unhindered down three thousand years ; that in Pindar still soars heavenwards, staring at the sun ; that rises and falls in Plato with the long, sequacious music of an Æolian lute ; that moves, stately and black-stoled, in Æschylus ; that reverberates with laughter half-Olympian in Aristophanes ; that pierces with a trumpet-sound in Demosthenes ; that smells of crocuses in Theocritus ; that chirrups, like a balm-cricket, in Anacreon ? If it be dead, then what language is alive ?

Or again, is that old Italian speech dead and gone, that murmurs in Lucretius a ceaseless, solemn monotone of sea-shell sound ; that in Virgil flows, like the Eridanus, calmly but majestically through rich lowlands, fringed with tall poplars and rimmed with grassy banks ; that quivers to wild strings of passion in Catullus ; that wimples like a beck in Ovid ; that coos in Tibullus like the turtle ; that sparkles in Horace like a well-cut diamond ?

No : Heaven forbid it ! No ! Pile upon
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these twin daughters of Omphæan Zeus mountains of Grammars and Grammatical Exercises and Latin Readers and Greek Delectuses and Graduses and Dictionaries and Lexicons, until Ossa is dwarfed and Pelion is a wart. Let dull, colossal Pedantry—unconscious handmaid of the Abstract Bagman—with her tons of lumbal lead press heavily on the prostrate forms. For a while they may lie, breathless and exhausted ; but when that is grown again wherein their great strength lay, then will they make a mighty effort, and fling high in air the accumulated scoria of ages : like a hailstorm in the surrounding sea will fall the fragments of a million gerund-stones ; and the divine Twain will clothe themselves anew in their old strength and beauty, and sit down by the side of Zeus Omphæus, exulting in glory.

No, no ! The music of Homer will die with the choral chants of the Messiah, and the strains of Pindar with the symphonies of Beethoven ; *una dies dabit exitio* Aristophanes and Cervantes and Molière ; the Mantuan will go hand in hand to oblivion with the Florentine, *divinus Magister cum Discipulo diviniore* ; the Metamorphoses of Ovid will decay with the fantastic tale of Ariosto and the music of Don Giovanni ; Horace will fade out of ken, linked arm in

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arm with that sweet fellow-epicure, Montaigne ; Antigone will be forgotten maybe a short century before Cordelia ; and Plato and Aristotle will be entombed beneath the Mausoleum that covers for ever the thoughts of Bacon, Kepler, Newton, and Laplace.

Moreover, before the last echoes of Greece and Rome shall have died away, a Slavonian horde will throng the Morea and the Cyclades ; and in some crumbling cathedral, Catholicism will have chanted, for the last time, its own *Nunc dimittis*, in the grand imperial language of the City of the Seven Hills.

When all this shall have come about, then may it be said with truth : ‘ Rome is dead ; and Athens is no more ! the words of whose wise ones went out into all lands, and the songs of whose singing-men to the ends of the world : their pomp and their glory have gone down with them into the pit.’

But, gentle Reader, long, long before this desolation shall have come about, you and I will be lying in a very sorry plight, with a strange and not beautiful expression on our human countenances : our quips, our cranks, our oddities all gone : quite chapfallen. Yes, Friend, a very long while, indeed, before all this shall have come about.

XV. A VISION

I WAS engaged one afternoon with my class in the study of that portion of the *Æneid* where the hero of the poem and the Sibyl journey together by dim, uncertain moonlight, through the shadowy spaces of the under-world. And when the lesson was over, I begged of my boys to learn one splendid passage by heart ; and leaning back my chair against the wall, by the monotonous murmuring of their voices I was lulled into a strange reverie.

For in the darkness of the under-world I saw three figures moving slowly ; and the one was gentle and benign of aspect, and in him I recognised the Divine Master of Mantua, ' the honour and the light of poetry ' ; and the second was of a sad and stern countenance, who regarded the Master with the admiration of a disciple ; and the third was like the Spirit of Myself.

And we had reached the rim of the seventh circle ; but from the inner circle there rose a stench so terrible and noisome that I looked aside, if perchance there might be a place of refuge. And in the dark wall of stone there was a wide fissure like a natural doorway ; and over the fissure was an inscription that I read with difficulty :

PÆDAGOGORUM DEFUNCTORUM SEDES.

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And the Divine Master went therein ; and the stern and sad Disciple followed ; and I went, holding by the garment of the latter. And the fissure opened into a great vaulted cavern, the farther end of which was wrapped in gloom ; and there were millions of gigantic engines shaped like mill-stones, and fitted each with a handle ; and the handle of each was like the sail-arm of a ship of war. And suspended from these handles were the forms of men ; and the mill-stones were motionless, and the place was empty of all sound. And suddenly, from the farther gloom came rushing three Erinnyes ; and the one was armed with a scourge, and the second with a yellow reed, and the other with what seemed to me a long thin broom, from which the handle had been shorn. And rushing to and fro, they scourged the suspended figures, and the place was suddenly filled with the whirring and the creaking of a million stone-wheels. And the Disciple and I looked inquiringly in the face of the Master ; but there was a look of unwonted pain in his benign countenance ; and while we gazed wonderingly, he gave a shrill cry, and fell to the ground as one suddenly bereft of life.

And when at length his spirit revived, we lifted him gently, and guided him, in our

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turn, back through the fissure to the rim of the seventh circle. But we feared to ask him aught ; seeing he had been sore troubled. But he, interpreting our secret thoughts, said in tones gentle and very sad : ‘ They whom ye saw were PÆDAGOGI in the upper world ; and their business it was to turn rapidly the gerund-stone. And forasmuch as I was born upon the skirts of Ignorance, and knew not the darkness of my day, therefore am I doomed to suffer sorely in the spirit with the turning of their gerund-stones. And I shall be PARSED thereby for twice a thousand years. And thereupon, the Pedant shall sit upon the Bagman, crushing him ; and the Pedant shall choke in his own fat. And after that my spirit shall have rest.’

At this moment I was roused by the sudden cessation of the wonted murmuring ; and looking up, I saw the hour was on the stroke of one, and dismissed my boys to play.

XVI. THE SCHOOLMASTER'S LOVE-LETTER

O *MEA cara, pulcra Mary,*
Quàm vellem tecum concordare !
What bliss with thee, my Noun,
to live,

Agreeing like the Adjective :
Not—Heaven forbid it !—*genere,*
Si esset id possibile ;
But being one, and only so,
Concordaremus numero ;
And I'll agree with thee, my pet,
Casu ; ay, casu quolibet :
Likewise, as Relative, I'd fain
A Concord Personal maintain ;
Thus borrowing from two parts of speech
The partial harmony of each :
Maybe, from *qui* if more we'd borrow,
I'd be in *quod*, and thou in sorrow ;
For, Mary, better 'tis to give,
Than borrow with your relative.
Three grades are in Comparison ;
My love admits of only one ;
Only Superlative to me
Thy beauty is, like *optimè*.
O Mary, Mary, seal my fate ;
Be candid, ere it be too late :
Is thy heart open to my suit,
Free as an Ablative-Absolute ?
Do, while I'm in the mood Optative,

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Follow me, darling, in the Dative :
Though I should be, for that condition,
Compounded with a Preposition :
Well, sure, of all the girls I see,
To each and all *præpono te*,
Te omnibus præpono, quare
Thou art my Preposition, Mary.
Ah ! dear, should everything go well,
And love should ring our marriage-bell,
Our happiness—to be prospective—
Would still, like *Ambo*, be defective :
But Plural-*caret* should we miss,
While Singular and complete in bliss ?
No, no : for a while, my Pearl, my Jewel,
We'd linger patiently in the Dual ;
Or ere a year had circled round,

In cursu rerum naturali,

Some morn or eve we should be found

Happy, *in numero plurali*.

Then one in heart and soul and mind,
We'd grow in love as years Declined :
Moods of Command and Dubitation
We'd blot from out life's Conjugation :
Our love, like all things sweet and good,
Were best express'd, when Understood ;
Timidly-noiseless, purely shy,

Unheard of all, yet plain to see—

Like peeping Moon in fleecy sky,

Or ' H ' in *Hora* and *Homine*.

But life, alas ! to all that live,

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Unlike true love, is Transitive :
To love, Intransitive love, is given
To Govern all in earth and heaven :
Yes, Mary ; the ring, that would bind you
to me,

Were a poor Conjunction that death might
sever—

A thin frail *et*, and a life-long *que* ;
But the link of our love would bind for
ever.

And so, when came the certain *Finis*,
We'd be content, my own, my dearie,
Sub uno tumulo duplex cinis,

Two Supines, in one grave, *jacere*.
With folded hands upon heaveless breast,
Side by side in our little earth bed,
Silent, as Gerunds in *Dum*, we'd rest,
While the thunder of noisy years roll'd
overhead :

And we'd sleep a sleep, still, calm, and sweet,
Till our graves grew forgotten and Obsolete ;
Waiting the Voice that, as good men trust,
Should make Active of Passive, and Spirit of
dust.

XVII. SUUM CUIQUE

NASCITUR, *non fit*, may be said as truly of the schoolmaster as of the poet. The popular, but mistaken idea is, that any young man, who at the age of twenty-one is well enough educated for a learned profession, but lacks the means or spirit to push his way in the world of Law or Medicine, may subside into a teacher of the Classics. Many young Englishmen think so themselves, and take clerical orders at the time of entering the despised profession, that they may escape from it, if on any white day a vicarage should fall from the clouds. These are they that are not born schoolmasters, but made schoolmasters of men.

In the matter of education, Scotland is, in many points, in advance of her southern neighbour. The middle-class preparatory schools of Dunedin are unapproachably superior to anything of the kind—if there be anything of the kind—in England. The teaching of the elementary classes in our High School and Schola Nova is even at present far superior to that of similar classes in any public schools in England with which I have been directly or indirectly acquainted ; and that includes almost all the public schools of importance in the country. With a few,

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but, I must own, very important modifications, our training of junior classes might be made almost perfect of its kind.

In our High School is still retained much of the beautiful vowel-music of Italian-Latin. The Greek Professor of our Dunedin University—faithful among the faithless, in this respect—can read a simile of Homer, without marring rhythm or ignoring accent.

In Scotland, also, the profession of teaching, though not sufficiently honoured from a social point of view, is rightly considered as 'specific,' and calling for specific qualifications. When Adam and Carson of our High School, Melvin of Aberdeen, and Carmichael of our own Schola Nova, first apprenticed themselves to their craft, they left no plank behind them for re-crossing at a favourable opportunity to ease or affluence in an extraneous calling. They put their hands to the plough, these simple men ; and there was no looking back. They devoted themselves to the business of classical instruction as single-heartedly as did the Apostles to the dissemination of Christian doctrine. They knew well enough that spiritual darkness abounded, but they left its enlightenment to another calling—the only one that in the dignity of usefulness takes precedence of their own.

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And one of them lived too short a life ; but they all lived lives laborious and useful and honourable. From dawn to sunset of their day of toil they sowed the seed, or drave the plough, or brake with harrows the obstructive glebe. And when at length it was growing dark, these husbandmen dismissed their little reapers and gleaners ; and gat them home, wearied ; and turned to ; and fell on sleep. No foretaste of earthly glory sweetened the bitterness of the last cup. From modest homes they were borne, unnoticed, to modest graves. But the statues of these Cincinnatus-teachers stand, not unwreathed with laurel, in the Valhalla of great and good and single-hearted schoolmasters ; with all the other good men and true. And the Valhalla is not in Dunedin, Reader ; but in a great and distant city ; a city not built with hands ; a city more beautiful by far than beautiful Dunedin.

About a furlong from my own lodgings, in a room as near to heaven, burns the midnight lamp of one who could read a play of Sophocles ere I could inarticulately scream. He has read more of ancient literature than many literary men have read of English. He has purified his Greek seven times in the fire. He has resuscitated many Aorists, that for centuries had lain dormant

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under mossy stones. He has passed, alone and fearless, through waste places, where no footfall had echoed for a hundred years. In England, nothing but a special interposition of Providence could have saved this scholar from the Bench of Bishops : in Scotland, nothing short of personal violence could have pushed him into a Professorial Chair. The fact is, this man, with all his learning, is bowed down with the weight of a most unnational modesty. Indeed, of this quality, as of erudition, there is as much contained in his well as would serve to irrigate his native country. Heaven knows what he might have been, had he consented in earlier life to play in public the cymbals of clap-trap and the tom-tom of self-conceit. But his voice was never heard in the Pala-verium of Dunedin. My friend, in fact, was ostracized by his fellow-citizens of the Modern Athens. You may hear of him at Jena, Göttingen, or Heidelberg ; but, in perusing the list of Doctors of our own Universities, after running your finger down some columns of mediocre Rabbis, you will experience a sensation of relief in missing the name of Veitch. *Præfulget ibi nomen eo ipso, quòd non cernitur.*

In day-schools, like the two great institutions of Dunedin, where the boys only give a
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morning and noon attendance for five days in the week, there is no call for the clerical element whatsoever. Their pupils combine the advantages of a public school with the inestimable and civilizing influences of home life. As their parents and guardians may reasonably be supposed to be in all cases Christian, there would seem to be no need for religious instruction in their school-hours ; and it might be thought sufficient, if such Institutions opened the work of each day with the reverent reading of some chapter of the New Testament, and a short and appropriate prayer ; and if a weekly lesson were given from the historical portions of the older Scriptures. Not to speak of the heterogeneous admixture of doctrinal lessons with those in Latin syntax and Rule of Three, the boys are supposed to hear family prayers each morning and evening ; to attend Divine Service regularly ; and to hear the Bible read and expounded by a devout father or mother. The hearing of one parable from the gentle voice of the latter is worth all the religious instruction that a master can impart in class, where in the hearts of boys the spirit of gentleness is too apt to succumb to the sterner spirit of class-ambition.

However the question is different in regard

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to large schools where children are, with questionable propriety, removed entirely from home. Here I can perfectly understand how well the moral and religious training of pupils might be entrusted to discreet clerical hands ; and would allow to the chaplain of such an Institution a pre-eminence in rank and emolument, as due to the sacredness of his calling. There would be some studies, also, in which he could give valuable help ; as, in that of Biblical and even Secular history ; and over all he might exert a wholesome influence. But I am wholly at a loss to account for the fact, that in England the teaching of the classical languages should be considered as almost necessarily devolving upon the clergy. Why should it require Holy Orders to fit a man to teach the heathen tongues of Athens and Rome, any more than to teach the Christian tongues of France, Germany, or Italy ? or, indeed, any more than to teach drawing or music or dancing ? Greek and Latin are important elements in the education of a gentleman, but they enter very indirectly into the training of a Christian. They may lead a man part of the way to the Woolsack ; but they cannot carry him one step on the road that leads to the Everlasting Gates. No : many children have gone in thereat, that never stumbled through a

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declension ; or that stumbled through one, and nothing more : many men, that in boyhood fell through the Asses' Bridge, have, in spite of corpulence, passed safely over the suspended camel's hair, that breaks only beneath iniquity : many dear, illiterate old saints have outstripped wits and critics and scholars and theologians on their journey to an unaspirated Heaven.

But it may be contended, that in a Christian country it is requisite to Christianize the whole curriculum of education. Granted : I question, however, from my own experience, whether the means taken are suited to the ends, and whether we may not so Christianize our education as to secularize our Christianity. I have known of a Clerical Master who, on a Sunday afternoon, could set a little congregation weeping with the rich mellowness of his voice and the depth of his pathos ; and many members of his little congregation had wept during the previous week, and would weep during the following week, beneath the force of his arm. Should the same fountain bring forth sweet and bitter ?

One of my Classical Masters at St. Edward's was ordinarily mild and gentle ; but he was abnormally severe on the days when we said our ' Crossman,' as the Catechism was appropriately named. There

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was less danger to us in a false concord or a false quantity, than in unwritten heterodoxy in the matter of the Sacraments. This was not a method calculated to render religious instruction pleasing in our eyes : and, indeed, it was very far from pleasing : it was associated with ideas of fear, and curiously jumbled with associations of Sallust and Xenophon. It was of the earth, earthy.

But, apart from the interests of children, what can the effect be upon clerical schoolmasters of their having to devote nearly their whole time and energies to the inculcation of secular studies ? Does it never strike them that there is an incongruity between the solemn obligations they once took, and the secular occupations they now follow ? I can hardly think that St. Paul, if he were permitted to abide with us a while, would lay hands upon any young Timothy, and enjoin him straitly to edify the brethren in turning Gibbon into Tacitean prose, or Shakspeare into Greek Iambics.

Again ; when a distinguished Fellow of some great Oxford or Cambridge college condescends to accept a Head-Mastership, he does so on the tacit understanding that he will in due time be rewarded with clerical promotion. Maybe, over a space of some twelve years, his capacities as a teacher will

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be honourably attested by the Class Lists of the Universities, and a sprinkling of Camdens, Porsons, Hertfords, and Irelands : he will have successfully conducted a very lucrative establishment of Boarders ; he will have thrown a flood of Latin light upon some ill-appreciated *équivoques grossières* in the Thesmophoriazusæ ; he will have plastered some severe masterpiece of Æschylus with annotatory stucco ; he will have published a most interesting and popular series of Lectures on “ The Rite of Confirmation, or the Laying on of Hands ”—and I may as well warn the reader, that the latter part of this title is to be understood in an episcopal rather than a pædagogic sense. When he has thus reached his zenith of fame and usefulness in one calling, he is translated to another, entailing duties and requiring talent of an entirely different kind. How many a Head-Master, beloved of his senior pupils, has passed the autumn of his days in worrying the clergy of a grumbling diocese ?

At all events, if such translations be right in themselves, why should they be confined in their operation ? We might transfer a veteran Barrister to the Presidency of the Royal Academy ; or reward a decayed Admiral with the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.

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There is another light in which to view the subject. There are a few instances, a very few, in our great English schools, where men of good repute in scholarship refrain from taking Holy Orders. They might take these orders any day it pleased their Bishop to hold an ordination. They would rarely or never be called upon to do clerical duty. Then why on earth are they so stupid as not to take a step which would at once improve their social standing, and open for them a path to distinction? Why, the ridiculous fellows carry an old-fashioned conscience trailing awkwardly at their sides; and, of course, it gets between their legs, and trips them up; and it serves the stupid fellows right.

A simpleton might argue that, by such a course of proceeding, they devote themselves entirely to the business of teaching, and demonstrate a special call to that special occupation. But this argument is obviously ludicrous. For, were it correct, we should see the highest prizes in the scholastic walk opened to these self-denying laymen. But these latter are the very men to whom, by a discerning public, those high prizes are closed and barred. For there is some mystic Open Sesamè, that unbars the gates to all Head-Masterships; and the words are known

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only to the clergy ; who, with the consent of the Laity, guard their secret, and pass it on and round, in whispers, only to one another.

Not many years ago, the patrons of a large proprietary school in the West of England offered their head-mastership to a very distinguished scholar, a friend of my own, on condition that he would take Holy Orders. It was more than insinuated that these Orders would merely affect the fashion of his neck-tie, and the prejudices of an enlightened public. My friend was a man of middle age, with habits and character thoroughly formed, and with as much idea of turning clergyman as of buying the practice of a dentist. Consequently, the offer, though pecuniarily a very tempting one, was not accepted. My friend is prosecuting his journey heavenwards with a well-stored brain ; a rather ill-stored scrip ; a white conscience ; and a black tie. For my own part, I regard such martyrdom as utterly out of place in a practical age. When the head-mastership is next vacant, I trust the patrons will make a similar offer to me. They have merely to name their salary—and their Bishop.

XVIII. THE SOCIAL POSITION OF SCHOOLMASTERS

MANY of my School Vacations I passed in Bruges and Brussels, and made the acquaintance from time to time of boys of my own age attending the *Athénées* or Public Schools of these towns. Indeed, my own brother received at such schools the greater part of his education. The Masters were laymen ; in a country next to Spain perhaps the most bigotedly Catholic in Europe. The means of coercion at their disposal seemed to my young English ideas barbarously simple. No birch ; no cane ; not even the ridiculously mild strap. How on earth could pupils learn Latin Versification, or any other useful accomplishment, without such obviously requisite stimulants ? However, their Classes of Rhetoric, or Senior Classes, *did* turn out well-educated and most gentlemanly-mannered men. But the strangest thing to me was that the Masters were never spoken of as occupying any peculiar or comical position in society. It never seemed to strike a boy to speak in terms of ridicule of his Schoolmaster any more than of his Clergyman or Medical Attendant. In fact, society at large seemed unconsciously to regard the Master of an *Athénée* as 'an

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ordinary gentleman,' neither more nor less.

One of the most polished and accomplished men I have ever had the honour of knowing was my brother's Music-master, whose lessons were given at a rate that would appear to us ludicrously small. He associated on terms of perfect intimacy with families of very ancient lineage in the neighbourhood of Bruges. He used to describe in the most humorous fashion the treatment he occasionally met with in English 'salons,' whose occupants, of undoubtedly high position at home, were temporarily residing abroad for reasons of financial retrenchment.

I have had many relatives educated entirely in Florence, and have heard that the masters, who visited the leading schools there, held a social position in that not unaristocratic city quite equal to that of an ordinary barrister amongst ourselves. And these masters had no ecclesiastical title to raise them in the social scale.

In England, at a very early period, the birch and cane were engrafted upon our educational system. They naturally made the position of a schoolmaster odious in the sight of children, and somewhat ludicrous in the eyes of the world, and especially so

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in the eyes of women. Now the English character is essentially practical, but by no means bigoted to logic. Their political Constitution might be theoretically assailed on many points ; but it works satisfactorily, as a whole. Their Church is an obvious compromise : its Articles are allowedly incongruous : but it works well. It certainly never produces a Xavier or a Carlo Borromeo : no saint with apostolic halo round his brow : but it also lacks the superlative vices that Rome cherishes in her catholic bosom. In the matter of education, England shows an equal disregard of logic, and an equal determination of working good ends by any practical means. The position of a schoolmaster needed backing up, it seemed, in some way. Then make the schoolmaster a Clergyman. Never mind the absurdity of calling upon a man to swear that he will spend and be spent in preaching the Glad Tidings, when he knows, and everybody knows, that he will pass his life in teaching the Rudiments of Greek and Latin. With a practical people such obligations are generally understood in a practical way ; and the practical way of understanding them seems, in this one instance, to lie in ignoring them partially or altogether.

There can be little doubt that, without

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the aid of clerical prestige, no body of men could have continued to command public respect in spite of the odium and ridicule attached to such flagrantly cruel implements as the cane and birch. The former of these, as I know to my cost, is painful in the extreme ; and the infliction of the latter is always brutal, and very often abominably indecent.

Now, in Scotland, whatever our faults may be—and Scottish writers on the London press purge us from time to time of our conceit—we are acknowledged to be a logical race. Consequently, we call a schoolmaster a schoolmaster. We no more think of allowing him to take fictitious orders, than we should think of giving a haberdasher the fictitious title of M.D. And yet a schoolmaster in Scotland has certainly need of any aid that could be rendered for the improvement of his social status. The latter is far below that of any other professional body. Yet low as is comparatively the social position of the Scottish schoolmaster, he can point to his ridiculous but almost innocuous leather-strap, and boast that he has contrived therewith to maintain discipline and stimulate to exertion, while a wealthier body, with rich endowments and ecclesiastical prestige, have made unsparing use of

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two instruments, whose barbarity as far exceeds that of his own strap, as the income of an Eton Provost exceeds that of a Rector of our High School.

But to revert to the consideration of the social rank of a master in a Scottish grammar-school. The Rectors of the two chief Edinburgh schools are exceptions to the ordinary rule. They enjoy a social rank befitting the dignity of their official duties. But how is it that the masters of classics, mathematics, and modern languages, in these and similar institutions, take by general consent a lower place at feasts than a medical man of little practice, and an advocate of few briefs ?

In the social estimate of a whole order of men, I am inclined to think the world at large cannot be altogether wrong. There is generally fault on both sides. If then we schoolmasters *are* at fault, it would be of use if we could only hit upon our weak point. We might then give it a fair and serious consideration ; and use means, if they could be suggested, for remedying the evil.

I have heard it said by a gentleman of very high position, and of reputed scholarship, that the subordinate master in a great Scottish school is only expected by a Scottish public to be a man of ordinary attain-

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ments, who can drill his pupils well in the rudiments, and just keep pace with them in their higher reading. While such melancholy opinions are generally entertained of our craft, it is especially incumbent upon us to endeavour by our teaching and our lives to belie them. It is because we too often give in, for want of courage or proper pride, to such a condemnation of our order, that we continue to be members of a Pariah profession. We are too often contented with the limited intellectual stores that were laid in at college. We too often go uninquiringly through a dull routine ; caring little whether or no we carry the inclinations and sympathies of our boys along with us, so long as we get through the prescribed work, and preserve a mechanical discipline. We are not impressed with the fact, that a schoolmaster cannot be too learned, too accomplished. Under any circumstances, something of the tedious must creep into the routine of school-work, and it will need a wide field of continual reading to enable one to illustrate and vivify daily lessons, that vary from the declension of *penna* to the study of the Agamemnon.

The pupils at our chief public schools study German and French. Should a master of the two great ancient languages be ignorant of

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linguistic studies, in which his pupils may be proficient? No: he should outstrip them immeasurably in every department of study that bears upon his own. He should be so impressed with the dignity of his calling,—and what calling, save the cure of souls, is more dignified?—so full of chastened respect for himself, as to command the respect of his pupils, though he may fail for a while to command that of the more unthinking of the public. If we could only work ourselves up to some such standard, we might then gradually dispense with that little leathern instrument, that still keeps a burr of ridicule attached to our black gowns.

But, stop: am I again travelling to Utopia? Let me turn my hobby's head, and gallop back to dear Dunedin. When a man's liver is out of order, what on earth is the use of his doctor's telling him to keep early hours; to use a cold tub; to live temperately, and take frequent out-door exercise? Why, his grandmother might have suggested that. What the man wants is a blue pill or two. They can be taken in a minute; and he need not materially change his dietetics. Could not some such violent but easy remedy be suggested for the cure of our social abasement? Certainly. Why should Barring-out be confined to boys? or

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Strikes to Artisans? A fig for political economy! Let us form ourselves into a League, and proclaim a general STRIKE OF SCHOOLMASTERS! There will be some sneaking recusants among us: but we will brain them with their own dictionaries.

Some summer morning Scotland will awake, and find every grammatical fountain frozen. What fun it will be for the boys! For a week the parents may outface the inconvenience; but in a month the animal, always latent in boyhood, will be growing rampant and outrageous. Gradually will it develop, unsoothed by the influences of grammar, unchecked by the sterner influences of our magic leather. No father will be safe in his own house. The smaller boys will be smoking brown paper in the drawing-room, and the older boys wallowing in Bass and cavendish in the lower kitchen.

Meanwhile, calmly reposing in the stillness of his back parlour, M'Gillicuddy will be putting the finishing-stroke to that folio edition of Cornelius Nepos, on which his fame in after ages is to rest; and I, in my aërial lodgings, shall be setting to Greek iamblings the moral aphorisms of the great Tupper, whose terseness and originality are the wonder of a grateful people.

Our hospitable Provost, like his prede-

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cessor in olden days when the English were marching north, will hold a meeting of troubled citizens. They will meet in arms: each father will be provided with his life-preserver of cut leather. One speaker will tell how nouns are at a fabulous premium; that an adjective may not be had for love or money. Another will tell the horrible tale, how whole families have for weeks subsisted on the smallest prepositions. They will attempt a compromise. We shall decline treating on such terms. They will surrender unconditionally; and our terms—monstrous as they may seem—shall be as follows:

A Schoolmaster, who shall have graduated at a University, shall hereafter be addressed, personally or epistolarily, with the courtesy usually shown to a second-rate Solicitor or a briefless Advocate.

Whosoever shall wittingly and wilfully offend against the above decree, let him for the first offence be dismissed after due admonition; but, on a second offence being proven, let him be sentenced to parse verbatim the folio edition of M'Gillicuddy's Nepos, declining all nouns, conjugating all verbs, and repeating all syntax rules, *usque ad Rei ipsius et totius Curiae nauseam*.

XIX. TINT, TINT, TINT

IT is now twelve years ago that I was for the first time brought face to face with a class, some fifty in number, of little Latin novices. They all regarded me with sensations of wonderment and awe : they had but a faint idea, luckily, of the terror with which I regarded them. I had, certainly, the recollections of my own long elementary training to guide me in my proceedings ; and I had the traditions of the school, to which I had been recently appointed as master, to direct my uncertain steps. But the recollections of my own training were all tinged with melancholy ; and with the traditions of my new sphere of duty I was but imperfectly acquainted.

In the middle of my class-room stood a machine, somewhat resembling a patent engine for the simultaneous polishing of many knives ; and I was desired to take a firm grasp of its wooden handle, and to turn it with vigour and rapidity. And an implement of simple leather was put into my hands, by the dexterous application of which I was to quicken the apprehensions of such children as might be uninfluenced by the monotonous music of my gerund-stone.

And for many a day, obedient to tradition and to my orders, I turned rapidly the wooden

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handle, and flourished vigorously the simple implement to the very best of my ability. But, strange to say, although I was then youthful and strong, and eaten up with a superfluous zeal for my calling, I could never turn the machine without its creaking painfully ; and whenever I applied my leathern implement to a child's palm, I was immediately conscious of a thrill, as of electricity, that ran from my finger-tips to the very centre of my nervous system ; and sometimes, after the performance of such an ordinary act of duty, I would find myself standing before my pupils with a heightened colour upon my face, and a tingling in my ears ; and to a looker-on I should have appeared as one ashamed of having done some questionable deed.

Finding all my efforts unavailing to work smoothly and noiselessly my mechanical engine of instruction, I at length relinquished it altogether ; and it has now been standing for years in a side-room adjoining my place of business, and is covered over with cobwebs, and rusted at the juncture of the stone and handle.

To supply the place of its simple mechanism I brought to bear upon my pupils all the moral and intellectual means at my disposal. I spared myself neither in the matter of time

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nor trouble in my endeavours to educe the dormant faculties of my charges ; and enjoying as I did for many years a bodily health impervious to fatigue, and having a keen sympathy with boyhood, I succeeded more and more, until I almost ceased at length to regret the disappearance of my gerund-stone.

But the more I gave satisfaction to myself, the less I gave satisfaction to the majority of my so-called patrons ; the guardians of my young pupils. From time to time, when I was indulging in a dream of appreciated toil, I heard of complaints being circulated by such as were favourers of mechanism in instruction. Pupils, in whose progress I had begun to take a keen interest, were from time to time removed without a word of explanation, or the civility of a farewell. They were not ‘grounded,’ said these waggish but unmannerly guardians ; meaning all the while, they were not ‘ground.’

I had almost begun to despair of my system, and to think that I had mistaken my calling ; and was casting about my eyes for some honest trade to which I might apprentice myself, when one afternoon my class was honoured with a lengthened visit from a gentleman of acknowledged rank and worth and judgment. After the lesson was

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over, I complained to this distinguished visitor that my system of conveying instruction, as being natural and philosophic, was popularly considered a more difficult one for the pupil than the ancient turning of a piece of mechanism. My visitor, who had a son under my charge, stated his firm conviction that my system was not only likely to produce better results, but was also in its operation far more easy and interesting for a young pupil to follow. From that moment I felt reassured, and determined never again to regret the absence of my gerund-stone.

And now to treat of the loss of my other auxiliary implement. The application of this latter, I can honestly say, was never made excepting with the view of stimulating over-dormant energies, and of repressing tendencies to chronic negligence or misconduct. I considered myself as an abstraction ; as the embodied representative of the class ; and used the implement only to protect the interests of the latter, which suffered, to my mind, whenever one of its members, by carelessness or lack of study, turned upon himself that stream of time and energy that should have run uninterruptedly to the irrigation of the body corporate. In fact, I made myself the dividend in a long

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division sum, whose divisor was 'duty'; the quotient, I found, was 'teacher' + 'superintendent,' and the remainder, 'personal identity,' which was very small in comparison with the divisor, and might practically be ignored. So, when a little fellow walked after me for a few days at the striking of the bell, with his hands beneath imaginary coat-tails in imitation of my gait, I considered him as only joking with me in my capacity of 'remainder'; and I merely asked him to desist, as otherwise I should make fun of him in revenge; and he desisted. And when a boy wrote my name upon the desk, I was contented with showing him how he had mis-spelt it; and he rubbed it out at my request. And when a boy, years ago, put his tongue into his cheek after an admonition, I showed his comrades what little control he had over that organ; knowing as I did that he intended to protrude it on the side that would have been invisible to me. And I may state that such trifling incidents were of so rare occurrence, that I could enumerate them all upon the fingers of one hand.

But still, although I was conscious that I used the implement with good intent, and aware that it was similarly used by men who were my superiors in age, and certainly

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not my inferiors in kindliness and sympathy with boyhood, I was haunted with an idea that the use of it was founded on an error in our system of instruction ; and I was long pondering where the error could lie ; and I found the subject far more difficult than I had at first supposed ; and I confess it still to be a problem difficult of solution.

I was in this frame of mind one day, when, according to an unalterable rule, there came under the influence of the electric implement a little, quiet, well-behaved, and intelligent foreigner. The application had scarce been made, when a young comrade—bless the lad!—gave vent to an unmistakable hiss ! Order, of course, was immediately and energetically re-established. But in my walk that afternoon by the sea, and in many a lonely walk afterwards, I thought about that little foreigner and his courageous comrade. And I thought how that little foreigner, returning to his own land, the ancient home of courtesy and gentle manners, would tell his friends of our rude, northern ways. And I trembled at the idea of my usage of the Electric Leather being narrated in the hearing of one of those terrible Colonels, whom their Emperor holds with difficulty on the leash. For I thought if ever our great metropolis were in their hands, how ill it would fare with all therein

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that turned the gerund-stone, and with those therein that bare my hapless surname. And the name of these is Legion. And knowing that the comrade was no vulgar and low-natured boy, I felt sure in my heart that there was at least something right in the impulse that had pushed him into danger and disobedience. But still I was afraid of allowing sentimentalism or impulsiveness on my part to take the place of duty however stern and unpalatable.

I was standing not alone one morning in the lobby of my own home, just before leaving for the day's work. A great-coat of mine was hanging from the wall. My Companion, in a playful mood, put a small, white hand into one of its pockets, and drew a something out; then thrust it back hurriedly, as though it had been a something venomous. And over a very gentle face passed a look of surprise not unmingled with reproof; but the reproof gave way almost momentarily to the wonted smile. But I long remembered the mild reproof upon that gentle face; for it was an expression very seldom seen there; and it came afterwards to be numbered with other sad and sweet memories.

Meanwhile, at the end of the last bench upon my class sat a boy who was very back-

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ward in his learning. He was continually absent upon what seemed to me frivolous pretences. These absences entailed upon me much additional trouble. I had occasionally to keep him and a little remnant in the room when the others had gone out to play ; to make up to him and them for lost time. And on one occasion my look was very cross, and my speech very short ; for it seemed to me provoking that children should be so backward in their Latin. And when the work was over, and we two were left alone, he followed me to my desk ; and said : ‘ You have no idea, Sir, how weak I am.’ And I said : ‘ Why, my boy, you look stout enough.’ But he answered : ‘ I am really very weak, Sir ; far weaker than I look ! ’ and there was a pleading earnestness in his words that touched me to the heart ; and, afterwards, there was an unseen chord of sympathy that bound the master to the pupil, who was still very dull at Latin.

And still he would be absent ; at times, for a day or two together. But it excited no surprise. For the boy seemed to sit almost a stranger among his fellows ; and in play-hours seemed to take no interest in boyish games. And by and by he had been absent for some weeks together. But I was afraid to ask concerning him ; thinking he might

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have been removed, as many boys had been, without a letter of explanation, or his shaking me by the hand. And one morning I received a letter with a broad, black edge, telling me that he had died the day previously of a virulent, contagious fever.

So when school was over, I made my way to his whilom lodging ; and stood at the door, pondering. For the fever, of which the child had died, had been to me a Death-in-life, and had passed like the Angel of old over my dwelling, but, unlike that Angel, had spared my first-born, and only-born. And because the latter sat each evening on my knee, I was afraid of the fever, and intended only to leave my card, as a mark of respectful sympathy. But the good woman of the house said : ‘ Nay, nay, Sir, but ye’ll see the Laddie ; ’ and I felt drawn by an influence of fatherhood more constraining than a father’s fears, and followed the good woman into the small and dim chamber where my pupil was lying. And, as I passed the threshold, my masterhood slipt off me like a loose robe ; and I stood, very humble and pupil-like, in that awful Presence, that teacheth a wisdom to babes and sucklings, to which our treasured lore is but a jingling of vain words. And, when left alone, I drew near the cheerless and dismantled bed,

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on which my pupil lay asleep in his early coffin. And he looked very calm and happy, as though there had been to him no pain in passing from a world where he had had few companions and very little pleasure. And I knew that his boyhood had been as dreary as it had been short ; and I thought that the good woman of his lodging had perhaps been his only sympathizing friend at hand. And I communed with myself whether aught I had done could have made his dulness more dull. And I felt thankful for the chord of sympathy that had united us, unseen, for a little while. But, in a strange and painful way, I stood rebuked before the calm and solemn and unrebuking face of the child on whom I had frowned for his being backward in his Latin.

That evening, as usual, my own child was seated on my knee, making sunrise out of sunset for myself and his Mother's mother. And the table was alive with moo-cows, and bow-wows, and silly sheep. And we sang snatches of impossible songs ; or hid ourselves behind chairs and curtains in a bare-faced and undeceitful manner. And the *Penates* at my hearth, that were chipped and broken, blinked merrily by the fire-light ; and the child was taken to his tiny bed ; and the chipped *Penates*, thereupon, slowly faded

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out of view, and disappeared among the cinders.

And I sat, musing ; alone. And yet not all alone. For in the chair, where recently had been sitting the mother of my child's Mother, there sat a grey, transparent Shape. And the Shape and I were familiar friends. He had sat with me many a time from midnight until when the morning had come peeping through the green lattice. And he had peopled all the chambers of my house with sad thoughts and black-stoled memories. So, never heeding my familiar friend, I sat, staring in the fire, and thinking.

And I thought, sadly and almost vindictively, of the dreary years of my own early boyhood, with their rope of sand, and the mill-wheel that had ground no corn. And I remembered how at times there would come to me in my exile the sound of my brother's laugh, and the sweeter music of my Mother's voice. But I remembered thankfully, that through years of monotonous work and rough usage I had enjoyed sound health, and had had companions, with whom I had walked, and talked, and romped, and fought, cheerily.

And I wondered whether I should be spared to see my own child grow to be a merry and frank-hearted little fellow ; to hear the

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music of his ringing laugh ; to see his face flushed with rude but healthful sport ; to hear of him as beloved for many boyish virtues, and reproved, not unlovingly, for his share of boyish faults. And I longed to be climbing with him the hill of Difficulty ; and lightening the ascent for him with varied converse ; resting now and then to look down upon the valley, or to let him gather blue-bells that grew on the hill-side.

And then I thought of a boy, who had sat of late on the last bench in my class-room ; with a timid and scared look beside his bluff and bold companions ; who had stood in the noisy play-ground, lonely as in a wilderness ; whom I had seen that afternoon in his early coffin, with the seal upon his forehead of Everlasting Peace ; the peace that passeth all understanding.

So I determined ; from the recollections of my own dreary boyhood ; for the mild reproof that once had clouded momentarily very gentle eyes ; for the love I bare my own little one ; and for the calm and unrebuking face I had seen that afternoon ; that I would do as little as possible in the exercise of my stern duties to make of life a weariness to young children ; and especially to such as should be backward in their Latin.

XX. THE PRESSURE OF GENTLENESS

A CLOSE relation of my own was for twelve years an officer in almost the severest of all continental services. In that chivalric army is conserved a traditional discipline, whose details would appal a democrat, and the exactions of which could only be endured by an obedient and military race. He tells me that, in his long experience, he only met with one Captain, who in dealing with his company avowedly ignored all means of physical coercion. On this Captain's breast were the Orders of two kingdoms and two empires : after one well-fought day he had been voted by acclamation as a candidate for the Order of the Iron Crown, which he would have obtained, had he added his own signature to those of all his brother officers ; and yet so soft-hearted was this *Chevalier sans peur* that any slattern beggar-woman could draw from him an ill-spiced florin. In a village, where a portion of the regiment were once quartered, the good Curé, at the close of a sermon on Christian Character, told his flock that, if they wished to see Christianity in action, they might see it in a Captain of Grenadiers, who clothed their poorest children with his pocket-money, and whose closest companion was ignorant of his good deeds. This Captain's

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company was noted as being the best-dressed and the best-conducted in the regiment. There were at Solferino (and there are, alas ! such cases in all engagements) cases of gallant but stern officers that fell by a traitorous bullet from behind. There was not one man in the company of this Captain that would not have taken in his stead a bullet aimed at him from the front.

A year and a half ago I met in Yorkshire an invalid young sailor. From his smooth face, short stature, and attenuated form, I should have taken him for a senior midshipman. To my complete astonishment I found he was commander of a Pacific liner, with a numerous crew under his orders, and in receipt of a splendid income. He had been third in command, when the two seniors had taken fever, and his gallantry under trying circumstances of all kinds had procured his unusually early promotion. I discussed with him the theory of discipline. He considered physical chastisement as brutal ; swearing as un-Christian ; and hectoring as unmanly. ' The man who cannot control himself is not fit to command a crew,' he said tritely and truly. I looked in wonder at this shrimp of a man, that was speaking with such calm confidence. ' I never,' he continued, ' raise my voice above its usual

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tone to enforce an order.' He was worn to skin and bone by a chest disorder of long continuance, which he considered would close his life at no distant date. I could have pushed him over with a rude jostle of my elbow. But there was something in his face that told you unmistakably he was not the man with whom to take a liberty. He gave me a remarkable anecdote of himself. His ship was alongside of an American liner in the Liverpool docks. The Yankee captain was dining with him, and the conversation fell upon the means of maintaining order in a crew. The Yankee scouted all means but the stick. He and his mates used on principle the most brutal means of coercion. During their argument, the steward came to announce that the English crew were fighting the Yankees on the neighbouring vessel. The captains went on deck, and the Englishman, slinging himself by a rope, alighted in the midst of an uproarious crowd. 'Well, my men,' said he, 'so you are making beasts of yourselves, and disgracing your captain.' And the big fellows slunk off without a word to their own vessel, and one or two of the ringleaders were set for an hour or two to swab the decks. But of the quarrelling tars there was not a man but could have lifted his wee captain, and dropped him overboard without an effort.

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I trust to God he may yet be living, and may long be spared, as a specimen of a quiet, resolute, English, Christian Skipper.

My chiefest friend at school was a man of widest mental culture, of even temper, and of sound judgment. Among his friends and my own at Trinity I knew a few men of a similarly high stamp. I remember one man in particular, in whom the Scholar and the Christian so curiously blended, that it would be difficult to say where his Latin ended and his religion began. He was a spiritual and mental Merman. But if I were called upon to name the Aristides of my life-acquaintance, I should name a man, whom I never knew till I had crossed the Tweed. I believe it would be as hard to warp a Carlyle into sentimental or religious cant, and a prophet-Cumming into common sense and modesty, as to twist the nature of my friend into petty words or illiberal action.

He was once the superintendent of a public educational institution. He had been present one day in the drill-ground, where an honest sergeant with a good deal of superfluous bluster was putting a little regiment through its facings. When the boys were dismissed, the sergeant approached his superior, and said : ' Excuse the liberty, Sir, but really, when you are more used to boys, you'll

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find that you must put more pepper into what you do and say.' 'Well,' said my friend, 'every man has his own way : for my own part, I don't believe in pepper.'

A few weeks afterwards, the Principal was in his library, when the sergeant was ushered in. 'I've come, Sir,' said the latter, 'to ask a favour. Those boys are a little troublesome at times. If you'd be kind enough just to stand at your drawing-room window for a few minutes when drill was going on, it would do a deal of good ; if you'd only stand for a few minutes, reading a newspaper.'

Ah ! worthy sergeant ; your pepper won't do after all. No, friend, keep it for your vegetables, and use it then in moderation.

I hold that men may be called of God to more offices than the holy one of the Christian ministry. There was an under-officer at my old school, who to me seemed always to partake largely of some of the finest attributes of the gentleman. He had failed through continued ill-health in business as a bookseller, and was a well-read man. He was uniformly civil and respectful to us, senior scholars ; but, while we could tip and bribe others, we could never venture on the liberty of an unadorned surname with him. This man was called to the humble office of maintaining order in the school-

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yard. So there are men called to command men on the field of battle, and boys in the school-room. I have met with a school-master in Scotland, who could govern a crowd of boys in one room, though they might be divided into scattered groups, and engaged in varied work ; and his only implements of discipline were a word or two of good-natured banter or kindly encouragement, and occasionally a calm and stern rebuke. I have been much struck by the expression of his opinion, that physical coercion cannot be dispensed with altogether. In defiance, however, of a kindness, a sagacity, and a judgment that I respect, I do most firmly believe that the necessity for physical chastisement rests mainly upon two blemishes in our ordinary school system : the mechanical nature of our routine of work ; and the crowding of our class-rooms. In the latter respect we are more at fault than our English brethren ; in the former we are far less sinning. In the teaching of our elementary classes we employ far more spirit, and far less wood ; and I wish I could add, ' no leather.' There is less of a gulf between pupil and master. The severest means of physical chastisement at the disposal of the latter is almost innocuous. But mild as our implement may be from the point of view of physical pain

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inflicted, its employment is of necessity associated with some degree of odium, and a more formidable amount of ridicule. I am convinced that many children imagine that we, schoolmasters, were as naturally born with tawse, as foxes with tails. Did you ever see children in a nursery play at school? The rule seems to be for the elder brother to play our part; and that part is limited to the fun or business of flogging all his little sisters.

We have gone a great way already in Scotland in the way of civilized teaching, in forbearing to use an instrument of acute pain and an instrument of indecent brutality. Let us make a farther advance, and if we can invent some intellectual and moral substitute for our ridiculous scourges, let us send the latter in bundles to the public schools of England, to be there adopted when their system is sufficiently ripened by a few extra centuries of Christianity. Let us clothe their scholastic nakedness with the last rags of our barbarism. Our boys will be none the less manly and respectful. Flogging can never instil courage into a child, but it has helped to transform many a one into a sneak. And sneakishness is a vice more hard to eradicate than obduracy. So far from curing an ill-conditioned boy of rude and vulgar ways, it is calculated rather to render inveterate in him

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a distaste for study, and a stolid hatred of our craft.

Let us be less careful of the mere number of our classes, and more careful of their intellectual culture. Let us care more for what we think of ourselves, than what the public think of us. The respect of others follows close upon self-respect. Let us not care to be called of men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' Let us be content with classes of limited numbers, every member of which can keep pace with a properly-advancing curriculum. Let us aim at a broad and invigorating culture, not a narrow and pedantic one ; let us ignore examinations of College or Civil Service, and aim only at the great and searching examination of actual life. Let our aims be high and generous, irrespective of the exactions of unreasoning parents and well-meaning but unqualified intermeddlers ; let our means of coercion be dignified, in spite of the trials to which our tempers may be exposed. Let us endeavour to make our pupils love their work without fearing us. They may live—God knows—to love *us*. Whether they ever love us or not perhaps matters but little, if we do our work single-heartedly. The *mens conscia recti* is of itself no mean reward. I am, perhaps, an enthusiast ; but I have an idea, that, ere a generation is passed away, the last sound of the last tawse will be heard

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in the leading grammar-schools of Scotland. Her scholars will be none the worse taught, and her schoolmasters none the less respected, when instruction has been made less rugged in her aspect, and discipline is maintained by the more than hydraulic pressure of a persistent and continuous gentleness.

And, O brother schoolmaster, remember evermore the exceeding dignity of our calling. It is not the holiest of all callings ; but it runs near and parallel to the holiest. The lawyer's wits are sharpened, and his moral sense not seldom blunted, by a life-long familiarity with ignorance, chicanery, and crime. The physician, in the exercise of a more beneficent craft, is saddened continually by the spectacle of human weakness and human pain. We have usually to deal with fresh and unpolluted natures. A noble calling, but a perilous. We are dressers in a moral and mental vineyard. We are under-shepherds of the Lord's little ones ; and our business is to lead them into green pastures, by the sides of refreshing streams. Let us into our linguistic lessons introduce cunningly and imperceptibly all kinds of amusing stories ; stories of the real kings of earth, that have reigned in secret, crownless and unsceptred ; leaving the vain show of power to gilded toy-kings and make-believe statesmen ; of the Angels that have walked

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the earth in the guise of holy men and holier women ; of the Seraph-singers, whose music will be echoing for ever ; of the Cherubim of power, that with the mighty wind of conviction and enthusiasm have winnowed the air of pestilence and superstition.

Yes, Friend, throw a higher poetry than all this into your linguistic work ; the poetry of pure and holy motive. Then, in the coming days, when you are fast asleep under the green grass, they will not speak lightly of you over their fruit and wine, mimicking your accent, and retailing dull, insipid boy-pleasantries. Enlightened by the experience of fatherhood, they will see with a clear remembrance your firmness in dealing with their moral faults, your patience in dealing with their intellectual weakness. And, calling to mind the old school-room, they will think : ' Ah ! it was good for us to be there. For, unknown to us, were made therein three tabernacles, one for us, and one for our schoolmaster, and one for Him that is the Friend of all children, and the Master of all schoolmasters.'

Ah ! believe me, brother mine, where two or three children are met together, unless He, who is the Spirit of gentleness, be in the midst of them, then our Latin is but sounding brass, and our Greek a tinkling cymbal.

XXI. SCHOLA IN NUBIBUS

A LEARNED botanist informs us that no flower is perfect. I am sorry to think he should be able to prove so saddening an assertion. What a world is this of ours, in which our very symbols of purity are impure ; of perfection, imperfect ! Will chemistry detect a flaw in elemental diamond ?

Poor Eve as she went weeping out of Eden, plucked a last nosegay ; but every flower she touched became infected with a petal-plague ; and the malady has gone spreading through all the vegetable kingdom from that sad day to this. Each plant has now its special part a-wanting. No leafy thing can jeer at its green brother. All come short of the perfect type of planthood. A specimen, complete in all its parts, may be sketched on paper to serve as a criterion of the special deficiencies of particulars ; but a perfect plant or a perfect flower can no more be found in Nature, than in the world a man utterly unselfish, or a woman utterly devoid of goodness.

Naturalists give an account equally humiliating of the existing animal creation. There appears to have been a physical Fall of man and beast. It must have been a curious sort of Zoological Garden where all were corporeally perfect. But how strange it is that

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all living creatures, biped or quadruped, should be foxes that have lost their tails ! Why should we upbraid the mole with blindness, or the sloth with inactivity ? A cat may point derisively to our now unflexile ears ; a marmoset to our now unprehensile toes ; a baboon may grin at our miserably poor, unswingable suggestions of abortive tails.

Man then appears to have had two Falls ; or, perhaps more correctly speaking, a spiritual Fall, and a physical Rise. There is an ebb and flow in everything. Nature is for ever playing a simple, a monotonous, but a terrible game. Odd and Even. Heads and Tails. See-saw, Marjory Daw. Here we go up, up, up ; and here we go down, down, down. If on the street a silver coin I find, Forthwith my elbow through a window goes : If Fortune on my right smile sweet and kind, Fate on the left comes treading on my toes. And so divines inform us that spiritually we have been degenerating for six thousand years ; and naturalists comfort us with the assurance that we have the while been physically improving. On the whole, then, we have been losers. By the time we are as bad as Beelzebub, we shall be as beautiful as Apollo. And Beelzebub and Apollo are philologically one.—What a wonderful study is Philology !

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It was after indulging in a train of some such desultory reflections, and observing the necessity of demonstrating actual imperfections by reference to a non-existent type, that I was led, about the middle of the next century,—in the spirit, or the clouds of my tobacco-pipe,—to pay a visit to an *olim* friend, whose name is carved by the side of my own on the upper bench of Old St. Edward's.

He now held a subordinate mastership in a public school, that was pleasantly situated at the foot of the Grampians. The buildings were stately, and the grounds charming. The playground commanded a not very distant view of noble, rugged mountains ; and a short walk brought you to the banks of a romantic trouting-stream. The pupils were some hundred and fifty in number, and belonged chiefly to the class of gentry, or to the upper middle-class of society. The staff of masters was selected from the most distinguished scholars and mathematicians of our Universities ; and the curriculum of study included English, French, Italian, German, Latin, Greek, and Mathematics. The latter branch extended over Euclid, Algebra, Trigonometry, and the Conic Sections. The pupils entered usually at the age of nine, and remained for a term of seven years. A

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few, who were destined for the learned professions, stayed sometimes for an extra year, or even longer, by way of preparation for the highest honours of our Universities.

The Principal of the place was a Clergyman or Minister : the religious and moral training of the boys was under his sole charge. Consequently, on Sundays he was undisputed master of all arrangements ; and on week-days he presided in chapel, morning and evening. His tuition was confined to Biblical and Profane History, in which subjects he delivered two prelections daily to the classes in turn, in such a way that each class attended one Biblical prelection, and two prelections on Profane History, every week. His classes were the favourite ones, I was told ; and no wonder ; for the Principal had learning and tact sufficient to make his lectures wonderfully interesting, and the sacredness of his calling exempted him from the necessity of employing punishment of any kind as a stimulant or preventive.

The pupils of the first year were engaged in the close and analytic study of their own language, and in Writing and Arithmetic. French was taught them upon a conversational rather than a philological or grammatical method. During the second year Italian was thrown in on the same method,

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and continued with the former studies to the close of the session.

The third year commenced with Latin, and this with the previous branches carried the pupils to the end of their fourth year.

German was now introduced ; but the modern tongues were taught almost entirely as spoken languages ; and, as no very extensive preparation was required for them out of class, these studies did not weigh very heavily upon the young pupils. Latin was commenced upon the *vivâ voce* principle, but became gradually more and more analytic, and was made the chief instrument for inculcating the philosophy of language. As every Classical Master was more or less conversant with the modern tongues, ample use was made of the idioms of these latter in illustrating the idioms of an ancient language.

At the commencement of the sixth year a select few, generally boys of superior talents, began the study of Greek ; and from their previous linguistic training it was marvellous with what rapidity they progressed in the study of this intricate tongue. For a time the *vivâ voce* method was adhered to, and it was really refreshing to hear the natural music of the spoken Greek. The other pupils, who were not intended for the learned

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professions, continued their former studies, which carried them gradually into wide and interesting fields of History, Oratory, Poetry, and Philosophy.

The plan of study, here drawn out, was not rigidly adhered to in all cases. There were several pupils, who, from reasons of health or comparative mental deficiency, were allowed to drop one or more of the Modern languages ; and some, after a while, were exempted from the study of Latin.

The study of Geometry was commenced in the fourth year ; but, after a fair trial, pupils were sent back to practical arithmetic who evinced no capacity for abstract mathematical studies ; and those who showed a marked and special turn for the latter were allowed exemptions from many other branches, to admit of their giving full attention to their favourite pursuits. Indeed, there were one or two instances of senior pupils, of about eighteen years of age, who had stayed beyond the usual term, and were engaged in the study of the Calculi.

I was especially pleased with the chapel service on Sundays, which was judiciously short and reasonably long. The singing of the hymns and anthems was exquisite. I was informed that, with the exception of a few boys who were physically unable to

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whistle a tune, the pupils generally could read simple music with ease ; and that several of them could play on one or two musical instruments with considerable effect. A concert was given at the close of my visit, and at my special request, in the great hall ; where several glees and madrigals were admirably sung, in some of which one of the masters took a prominent part ; and a quartette was played more than passably by three of the pupils and the same master, who was an excellent player, it appeared, on the piano-forte and organ.

I must confess, I was a little amused to find that even dancing was not entirely lost sight of ; but the lessons in this department were entirely optional.

The Principal and all the masters breakfasted and dined with the boys in the great hall ; and once a month the dinner-table was honoured with the presence of their wives, and lady-visitors from the neighbourhood. These days were, of course, *cretati* ; and every one was bound to appear in his best clothes and his best manners ; and very often on these occasions the evening was spent in music or theatricals, or both, in the great hall.

I went round the dormitories, and found that each boy had a separate, well-ventilated room. On the table of each room was a

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New Testament ; but whether it was much read in each instance I am of course unable to state ; at all events, if it was ever read in any one instance, it would be read spontaneously, and not from the motives of either fear or hypocrisy.

The Sunday arrangements struck me as being remarkable for the extreme, and, to my mind, excessive liberality they evinced in the Principal, who was, as I have stated, a minister of the Gospel. The boys attended service twice ; once in the morning and once in the evening. In the afternoon they were allowed to walk in the grounds ; under the cloisters in wet weather ; or to read quietly in the public library. There was a considerable range of book-shelves from which books might be selected ; and these books were by no means confined to religious subjects. I was, although a layman, startled, and indeed a little shocked, to find that the Principal had not excluded from the Sunday shelves many books of profane travels, and many of the works of Johnson, Goldsmith, Washington Irving, and a terrible phalanx of secular poets, such as Cowper, Gray, Southey, Wordsworth, and Tennyson. However, as the reverend Principal was a man of undoubted piety, of very extensive learning, and capable of defending his views with sound logic and

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good-humoured banter, I kept my opinions to myself ; but I resolved in my own mind, that if ever I sent a son or nephew to this school, I should previously stipulate that on Sundays his reading should be confined entirely to useful sermons and entertaining tracts.

I was so charmed with all I saw in my short visit to this beautiful valley, that at times I thought I was enacting the part of Rasselas. One morning, however, in my rambles I stumbled, in a sequestered place, upon a knot of little fellows who were in a great state of excitement, and somewhat annoyed, apparently, at my fortuitous interference. In a moment I perceived the cause of the meeting. There had been a fight. One little fellow was being led away, victorious, with a bloody nose ; and another, with a black eye, was being comforted under defeat. I was at once bound over to secrecy. However, the combat was discovered, all through the unfortunate black eye, that very evening by the Principal, who certainly did not visit the matter very severely upon the chief delinquents. ' The fact is,' said he to me in private, ' the boys were pretty much of a size, and there was a little bad blood between them, which this fight has let in a wholesome way. I gave them an imposition, and some

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words of kindly counsel ; but really, in my heart, I was not very angry ; for they are both capital lads, and will now be the fastest of friends.' In the case of bullying, however, I was told that the Principal was exceedingly severe. One case of a very aggravated description had come before him two years previously and he had had recourse to a singular mode of jury-trial. A council was held of all the Masters and the Captain of each year : the vote of each individual, man or boy, being of one value. The Principal, who had no vote, stated the case fully, and the culprit was allowed to make his defence in words or in writing, personally or by proxy. In this instance the culprit was expelled, although one vote in four would have exempted him from that extreme penalty.

I was particularly struck with one feature of this Institution. I was speaking to the Principal of the open Scholarships, and Medals, and Fellowships at our great Universities, and the prizes in the various departments of our Civil Service that had been thrown open to public competition ; and I inquired if any special arrangements were meant to qualify—I meant 'cram,' but I was afraid to use the word—to qualify pupils for those special ends. The Principal answered me half-gravely, half-smilingly :

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‘ When I preach to my little fellows on Sundays, or lecture to them on week-days, I endeavour continually to bring before them the example of One, who went about doing good, simply because goodness was good. And from early and later Christian history, and from profane history as well, I can show them instances of men who throughout laborious lives preferred virtue to profit, goodness to glitter. To my colleagues is entrusted the intellectual education of my charges. They would be counteracting much of my teaching, if they were continually to be placing before their pupils sordid motives of gain, or even the less ignoble but still unholy motives of ambition. I should prefer a boy to be led on to work, merely because work was his duty ; and I should wish a teacher to do his utmost to make that duty a pleasure. It is the business of my colleagues to give a general and broad intellectual training to their pupils, that the latter may be fitted, some for professional life hereafter, and all for the position of gentlemen : should prizes fall in their way, they will be welcome, although they were never our special ends in view. My duty is to prepare my boys, by my poor teaching and my poorer example, for the fulfilment in after life of simple social and Christian duties. There is only one prize for which my

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teaching prepares boys or men : it is a very high prize, and very hard in the gaining. And whether or no that prize is ever gained, I am unable to tell. For I stand upon my little Pisgah, and am forbidden to follow in haste. I can only state this for my colleagues and myself, that, while we should be glad enough to hear of particular instances where brilliant success at our Universities or in the busy world were attained by our pupils, we should be far more thankful to find that they were generally esteemed in after life as intelligent gentlemen and good Christians.'

Towards the close of my visit, I was present one afternoon in the private library of the Principal, when a small *posse* of senior pupils came to bid him farewell before leaving for the University. After a long and pleasant and familiar conversation, the Principal rose, and, standing in front of the fireplace, addressed his small but attentive audience to the following effect. As I write from memory, I give the purport only of his words.

'I am now addressing you, Boys, for the last time *ex cathedrâ*. Listen then to a few words of advice, and give them hereafter some little heed. On entering the University, do not follow the received dogma, that a Freshman is traditionally bound to extravagance or folly. Be in no hurry to form ac-

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quaintances. Sympathetic friendships will cluster round you in due time. Associate, by preference, with those of your own rank, or with those a little above it. Neither seek nor avoid the company of the very exalted ; but never associate with men beneath you in social position, however wealthy, affable, or good-tempered they may be. Of course, if a man be possessed of surpassing abilities or unusual force of character, in his case social distinctions are annihilated.

‘ Read with a view to Final Honours only, without swerving aside to win special prizes or scholarships. Should these latter fall naturally in your way, you can try for them without harm. In the perusal of classic authors observe closely all mannerisms, and imitate none ; though to do so would give you extra marks in an Examination. In translating an ancient writer never strain an idiom of your own tongue for the purpose of showing the accuracy of your scholarship. The idea is incorrect that pure scholarship entails a corruption of native taste. The idea was at one time generally entertained ; and has now, I regret to state, many learned supporters, whose hybrid English should be a warning to young scholars.

‘ In your College lecture-room listen with respectful attention to what is said ; but

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abstain from taking notes. Half of what you hear is better forgotten ; with much of the remainder you will probably disagree : what residue is worth remembering will be remembered from its singularity.

‘ Your chronology is more favourable than my own. There are three public Professors now at Oxford, whose catholic and unpedantic lectures are replete with interest and instruction : their united efforts have thrown a new vitality into the old dry Academic teaching. Cambridge can boast of no genial and wise philosopher that can render the study of Greek a study of more than verbal subtlety, like the Friend of youth at Balliol : no Cantab Latinist can compete in combined learning and usefulness with Mr. Conington ; though a parallel to Mr. Arnold in poetry and enthusiasm may be found in a Cambridge Professor of History. This superiority of Oxford in professorial teaching would weigh more heavily with me than ever her present, but I trust only temporary, superiority in boat-racing. Had I ten sons, I should send them all to Oxford, under present circumstances. At Trinity, Cambridge, an advanced student may now attend not without profit a classical lecture-room. In my own day, at this latter University, such a student might attend for a year the classical lectures of a

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College Tutor or a University Professor without one sentence falling from the lips of either that was worth picking up, except for the purpose of throwing out of window.

‘ Use a Dictionary as seldom as possible ; a Grammar, never ; an annotated edition of a Classic only where an author does not explain himself by himself, or is not illustrated by contemporary writers. I would caution you in particular against the study of German writings on classical subjects. In the notes of Porson and Elmsley you taste the pure and delicate aroma of classical learning : in the exhaustive Excursuses of Hermann and Heyne you have the fibre boiled down with the leaf : in modern English critics you have the over-boiled mixture of the Germans reboiled. The longevity of the patriarchal days is passed for ever ; otherwise, a hoary youth might amuse his fiftieth decennium with plodding through the learned volumes that have very nearly made Horace dull.

‘ Continue your reading of modern languages, as a wholesome alterative in the midst of classical and scientific studies. Do not avoid the society of Ladies. To pass an evening with a high-bred, accomplished and intellectual Lady is for mental improvement equivalent to the perusal of two books of the *Æneid*, or of one Greek Play. Travel abroad

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when you have the opportunity : obtain what introductions you can to foreign men of letters : seek admission to the studios of Artists, and the rooms of Musicians ; and perfect your accent of each tongue in these best of all schools, not neglecting the Café and the Theatre.

‘ In dress follow fashion at a short distance, so as never to be quite in it, or quite out of it. In everything avoid singularity. Guard against prejudices or superstitions of College and University. There is more wisdom without the walls of either than within them. Let there be nothing about you to designate your School, College, University, nationality, or religious denomination.

‘ Never mention my name except in answer to a question ; and in your festive meetings forget me altogether. A eulogy spoken on such occasions is tedious to the hearer, and no compliment to the subject.

‘ Be slow in forming your opinion of others ; and slower in expressing it. Use a superlative word as seldom as possible in conversation. In speech or writing aim at perspicuity rather than at wit. He who speaks to be understood is thinking of his hearer ; he who studies his expressions is thinking of himself ; and a brilliant talker is seldom a polite one. Never attempt an epigram in

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conversation, until you have seen more of men and manners. The epigrammatic sharpness of a young man is but the condensation of sciolism. Oracular brevity is the prerogative of age and experience.

‘ Never canvass your own characters, even in confidential converse with an intimate friend. He who touches on a good quality of his own is weakening what he touches. But while self-praise enfeebles, self-disparagement emasculates. Repentance of the heart is silent, even in the recesses of the closet : it is subtler than any gas or ether, and is sure to escape through open lips, or to evaporate in words. Besides, he who bemoans a weakness to a neighbour is too often preparing himself to give way to it, and repenting by anticipation.

‘ If you are in any temporary distress, pecuniary or otherwise, apply frankly to your fathers or to myself. If in spiritual trouble, I would gladly give you help, if help were in my power to give ; but I would counsel you to seek help from the Father of us all, and from Him alone.

‘ Respect authority, but never fear it ; and respect yourselves more than all authority. Be chivalrous to all women of all ranks for the sake of your mothers or their memories. Be religious in such a way that no one may

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suspect you of being so, or take a liberty with sacred subjects in your presence as though you were the opposite.'

It was with most unaffected regret that I bade good-bye at last to my friend, his colleagues, and their admirable Principal. I confess I do not even yet fully understand the character of the latter. For, while there are phases in it that seem half-apostolic, there are other phases that bespeak the man of the world. At my departure, with a smile he presented me with a cigar-case filled with choice cigars ; which circumstance I considered, and consider still, as remarkably eccentric on his part ; for, although I smoked occasionally of an evening in his library, I know for certain that *he* has not smoked a cigar for years.

And so, Reader, ended, as it began, my pleasant visit to the *Schola in Nubibus* ; appropriately ; in smoke. Which thing is an allegory.

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